

Future Home of

GCS | GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



BIG NEWS!

WE NOW OWN BEVERLY MANOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

At the end of 2021, we put in an offer on Beverly Manor Elementary School. On January 2022, we closed on the contract and got that in place, which gave us a period to look and evaluate what it would cost to move in. After our evaluation, we closed on the property and now own Beverly Manor Elementary School.

Watch full announcement
HERE





GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL WARRIORS

This year we returned to sports in a very big way. Not only were we able to play sports without many restrictions due to COVID, we also had a great increase in student participation and fan attendance. Our sidelines and stands were packed in many cases and the kids were able to be as close to normal as possible. The joy on the faces of athletes, parents, staff, and fans was a welcome sight to see.

VACA STATE CHAMPIONS!

MSG Cross Country
MSG Soccer
Varsity Basketball
Varsity Golf



All-VACA Conference 1st Team

VG Cross Country - Kaitlyn Harper, Maddie Harper, Jessica Dryer, and Savannah Jones

VG Volleyball - Caroline Reid

VB Cross Country - Nathan Reid and Jed Derrick

VB Soccer - Bennett Carter, Chase Ratigan, and Trevor Schwartz

VG Basketball - Aubrey Greenmun

VB Basketball - Justin Hain

Varsity Baseball - Peter Shifflett and Isaiah Riddle

VG Soccer - Aubrey Greenmun

Varsity Golf - Preston Fitzgerald





FINE ARTS

UPDATE

Karen Palumbo

FINE ARTS DIRECTOR

At GCS...

...the fine arts exist to encourage and assist our students in developing their God-given gifts and talents through visual and performing arts. We do this as an act of worship and to honor the Master Artist. As image-bearers of our creator, engaging in the arts deepens our understanding of Him as the Creator and furthers our relationship with Him. For some of our students, this way of knowing God and themselves had been lying dormant for a year and a half. To see our students re-engage in the arts was life-giving this year! For some, it's as if they were remembering the joy that participating in the arts has brought them in the past, and for others, it's as if they were experiencing this joy for the first time.

This fall we saw the return of the elementary school musical! Our 4th through 6th grade students put on a spectacular performance of *Once Upon a Parable*, under the direction of Lisa Stephens. This long-standing tradition had taken a break for several years, and it was such a joy to see the students step on the stage as performers for the first time.

For the first time since 2019, we had active choirs at all levels: elementary, middle, and high school. With that came the return of in-person concerts and participation in music festivals. Our Christmas and spring concerts brought packed houses with GCS families, staff, alumni, and students celebrating together through song. In the spring all three of our choirs competed in the Kings Dominion Festival of Music, earning top scores and high praise from the judges—one in particular who exited the theater to speak to our director personally and commend our choral program.

Our high school choir program saw a revitalization this year, boasting 20 members and auditioning for All-District and All-State ensembles. This optional opportunity produced four All-District choir members and two All-State choir members and an alternate. These are the highest honors given to high school choral performers.

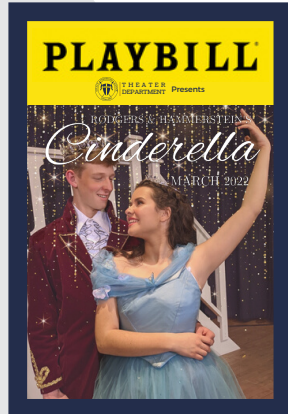
Nursing home visits have been a highlight for our students and members of the community, and we were thrilled to be able to sing to these folks again this year. We even received a special treat from one nursing home who wanted to surprise the students with an indoor snowfall!



"The fine arts exist to encourage and assist our students in developing their God-given gifts and talents through visual and performing arts."

One of the hardest-hit programs was our beloved high school theater program. In 2020, our students were two weeks away from performing *The Little Mermaid* when they had to put the show on hold due to COVID. This was a devastating loss for so many of our students and the community at large who look forward to the excellence our school displays each spring in our musical.

This year our students did not disappoint with the production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. "My drama students returning to the stage for the first time in two years in a full length musical, delivering performances of a lifetime—truly the stuff of which dreams are made.



I think all of the passion for performance that had been bottled up for two years poured out in a spectacular way. No teacher could feel more proud," says Becky Boyette, HS drama director. It was incredible to see these students perform with such grace and poise, especially since the only cast members who have had the opportunity to perform in a full-scale musical at GCS were the seniors.

"...it's as if they were remembering the joy that participating in the arts has brought them in the past ..."



Coffeehouse | April 1, 2022

A new highlight for the fine arts this year was hosting a coffee house for the high school on our auction stage. Students had the opportunity to perform under the lights for their peers, teachers, and families. What an amazing night it was! Just about every genre of music was covered. From musical theater to jazz, classical, pop, and original compositions, our students shined! Several shared personal stories behind the songs they chose and their testimonies. It was a night filled with laughter and tears, and we look forward to many more events like this in the future.



"...to equip the next generations to draw attention to the Master Artist."

As was the case with so many things in our lives, the arrival of COVID meant pressing pause on the arts as we know it at GCS. There are so many benefits of the arts that we took for granted, and without an active fine arts program those things became apparent. So in a way, COVID was a blessing in disguise! The return of a full-fledged arts program this year reminded us how much we need the arts. We saw how God has uniquely gifted some of our students in ways that we didn't even realize. Participating in the arts allows some of our students to shine outside the classroom, where perhaps they don't always feel super strong. Discipline, focus, memorization, teamwork, risk-taking, and so much more are honed when we participate in the arts. At GCS we take seriously the calling to create as we have been created. The arts provide great opportunities to shine light into darkness and bring beauty to the brokenness all around us. What a joy to be part of a place that sees and values this calling in our students and endeavors to equip the next generations to draw attention to the Master Artist.



THE GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

AGAPE AWARD

IS PRESENTED TO

Megan Hale
3RD GRADE

The Agape Award is awarded each year to the teacher who we believe fully embodies the mission of the school. Grace Christian School would like to recognize that we hear the words of Jesus when He said in John 15, *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.* We present this staff award as a sign of our gratitude for her love for the students we have been entrusted with.

coram Deo Award

IS PRESENTED TO

Bill Renton

Bill Renton, long-time GCS teacher and coach, will be the first recipient of the GCS "coram Deo" Award. This is our school's most prestigious award, honoring a past Warrior for a life lived-out well before the face of God.



Relational Christian Education

GEORGE MCNAIR | GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
GCS CLASS OF 2001

Much of this essay is a practical application of *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon* by David Kinnaman and Mark Matlock. It is my deep desire that GCS students leave Grace as resilient disciples of Christ, but it is my fear that many current students have a growing antagonism towards the Church and towards Grace. There are unique challenges that our current culture presents. Teens are more isolated and anxious than ever, all the while being constantly flooded with messages antithetical to God's truth. These new challenges require us to rethink how we engage our students. Christian worldview education will continue to have a vital part to play in this effort, but more is required. An intentional commitment to fostering a relational community, centered around Christ is necessary.



"It is my deep desire that GCS students leave Grace as resilient disciples of Christ."

Over the many years of its existence, two characteristics have been consistent at Grace and have helped to make it a special place. The first is the strength of its community, in which administrators, teachers, and parents partner together to provide a distinctly Christian education to young people. The second is its students' knowledge that their teachers care for them. Both of these characteristics are representative of a community that is centered on Christ.

Over the past several years, GCS has rightfully dedicated itself to Christian worldview educational practices. This vital effort must remain at the heart of Grace's mission as we are now living in a post-Christian culture that has become opposed to the Bible, Christian values, and even the idea of objective truth. However, we will rarely reach deeply into the hearts of our students and build them into resilient disciples of Christ if we do not first establish healthy, loving relationships with our students. It must be undeniable to our students that they are cared for. Students must know not only that the Gospel is true, but also that the Gospel is good. The Gospel is likely to fall on deaf ears of a student who believes their teacher does not care for them.

This perception, even if it is unfounded, may create in the student an adversarial attitude against the Gospel and against GCS. Students may suppose "If 'Teacher A' is a Christian, then I want no part of Christianity." In the same way, the mission will also be undermined if our parents do not feel partnered with or if they feel that Grace is no longer a spiritually healthy place for their child

So, how best do we express our care for students? How do we better partner with parents?

Administrators and faculty must strive to build a Christ-centered community in which relationships are valued and fostered, wherever and whenever possible. High school students particularly must know that they are cared for, that they are loved, and that they belong. The current generation is the most isolated, lonely generation perhaps ever. The lasting trauma of COVID and the continual influence of social media, video games, and pornography play a huge role in this. We must recognize the deep lack of Christian community that exists for many of our students. This need should inform everything we do. The following five principles should guide Grace's mission moving forward:

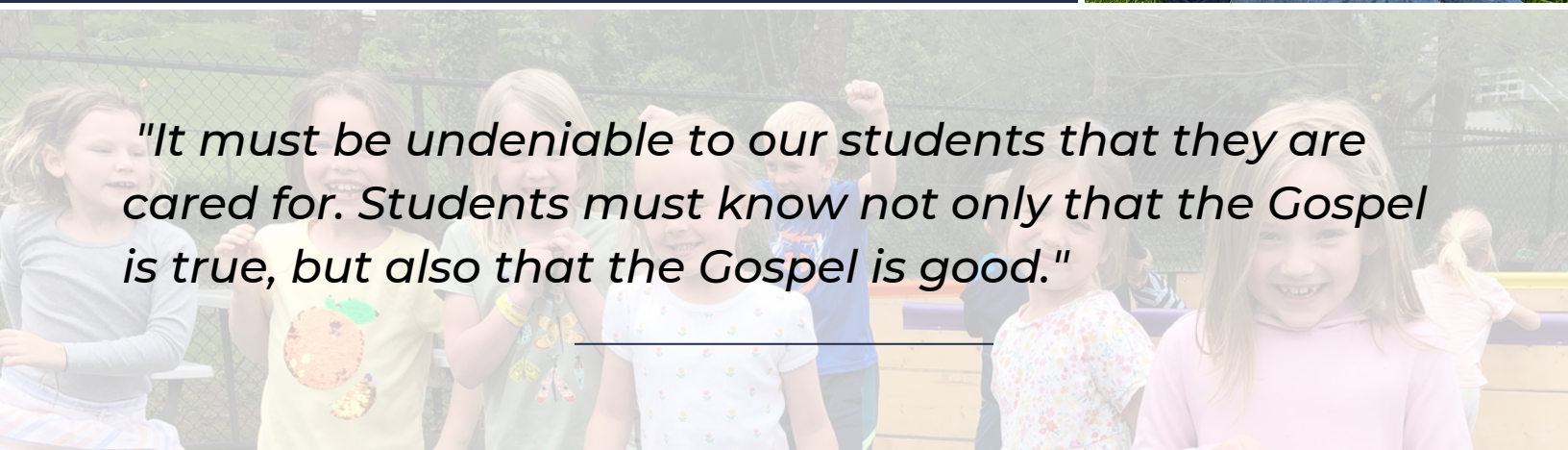
GCS STUDENTS MUST:

1. Experience intimacy with Jesus on a daily basis.
2. Develop the muscles of cultural discernment.
3. Cultivate meaningful intergenerational relationships.
4. Train for vocational discipleship.
5. Engage in countercultural service.

Breakdown on next page.



"It must be undeniable to our students that they are cared for. Students must know not only that the Gospel is true, but also that the Gospel is good."



The Breakdown

1. EXPERIENCE INTIMACY WITH JESUS ON A DAILY BASIS.

This means rejecting religious clutter in exchange for closeness with Jesus.

- Challenge students to keep Christ at the center of their daily lives and model those practices.
- Be sensitive to students' struggles; talk less and listen more.
- Read the Word together and expect Christ to speak (listen).
- Pray together and expect Christ to speak (listen).
- Provide optional opportunities for students to seek Christ more.

2. DEVELOP THE MUSCLES OF CULTURAL DISCERNMENT.

This means taking part in a robust learning community under the authority of the Bible in order to wisely navigate our culture.

- Continue to prioritize Christian worldview educational practices and hire staff who are dedicated to this mission.
- The current culture in which we live, and in which our students are far more immersed, is naturally isolating and anxiety-producing. We must call them out of isolation without expecting them to reject technology altogether.
- Encourage our students to seek God's wisdom over the "wisdom" of Google, YouTube, etc.
- Digital discernment is vital for this generation's discipleship.
- The Bible is reliable, inerrant, and sufficient! It should be read actively and shown to have relevance to daily life.
- Listen and meet kids where they are. Engage with them and bring empathy to their struggles and challenges.

3. CULTIVATE MEANINGFUL INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

This means being devoted to fellow believers who we want to be around and become.

- This generation has grown up in the most corporatized version of church. Many of them have not had the same church experience that older Christians had. Some don't know what a vibrant Christian community looks like. Others have lost this due to COVID.
- Isolating factors of our culture exacerbate this lack of community.
- Isolation strains relationships and opens the door to other worldviews.
- Provide for students' positive experiences within Christian community.
- Mentoring relationships and peer relationships
- 1 Cor 1:10, 1 Thes 5:14, Col 3:13



The Breakdown *Continued...*



4. TRAIN FOR VOCATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP.

This means knowing and living God's calling, especially in the arena of work, and right-sizing our ambitions to God's purposes.

- Our students should be God-centered in their ideas about their calling and work.
- Promote a culture of integrity.
- No sacred-secular divide.
- This generation is incredibly ambitious, but also fame-obsessed.
- This generation is incredibly stressed about the future because everything seems uncertain. Understanding God's calling and purpose takes the pressure off.
- Vocational discipleship brings purpose to everything students do and connects their faith and their work in practical ways.



5. ENGAGE IN COUNTERCULTURAL SERVICE.

This means living out one's faith by trusting God's power and living differently from cultural norms.

- Being "on mission" and serving the community and those in need should be ever-present.
- Service is an outward expression of the other four practices.
- Serving a person's physical and spiritual needs recognizes the value of the whole person.
- Serving others bonds Christians together through shared experience.
- Serving others shows others something different from the world. We look distinct.
- Service fights off entitlement and self-centeredness and stokes compassion.
- Prayer should be a big part of missional work. Christ at the center.
- Sharing our faith in public while serving others is particularly important. This builds conversational courage.

Final Thoughts

Those who are particularly gifted at communicating and connecting with teens are uniquely suited to play a particularly strategic role in leading this effort, as those who are more naturally relational are likely to speak more clearly into the lives of our students.

We also should not minimize the level of trauma our students have experienced over the last two years. Trauma is not something that goes away as life "gets back to normal." Our students are experiencing anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and other mental and spiritual battles that are not easily won in a chapel service. But how will we know their struggles if they do not trust us enough to share these struggles?

*"It is imperative that we reach the hearts of our students,
and not just their minds."*



ONLINE STORE

Represent your favorite school!

SCAN TO SHOP NOW!



WE ARE HIRING

view all open
positions here:



Spread the word.
Review us on Google!



You Are Invited

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

ALUMNI & FRIENDS CHRISTMAS GALA

JOIN US FOR DINNER, LIVE MUSIC, FAMILIAR FACES, AND TO
CELEBRATE THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS WITH FRIENDS!

THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO GCS ALUMNI, ALUMNI PARENTS, PRIOR
STUDENTS AND STAFF, AND THEIR GUESTS OVER 18.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2022 • 6 PM
19 SOUTH MARKET STREET • STAUNTON, VA
ATTIRE • SEMI-FORMAL
RSVP REQUIRED



RSVP HERE

Please reach out with any questions:
Advancement@GCSWarriors.org or (540) 886-9109

GCS

GRACE
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

Sound Academic Education. Christ-centered Environment.

FOLLOW US



@GCSWARRIORS