

GRACE Holy Cross: A New Home, Blessed Beginning

As the first week of the 2026-27 school year came to a finish at GRACE Holy Cross Catholic School this August, students, staff, and dignitaries celebrated an exciting facility move with an all-school blessing given by Bishop David L. Ricken.

Holy Cross is now located on Wequiock Road on the northeast side of Green Bay in the Town of Scott, near the Red Smith and Bay-Highlands neighborhoods and the scenic Wequiock Falls. Over the summer, the school moved, seeking new facilities for staff and students. It is relocated in the former Wequiock Public Elementary School building. The move was made possible by an anonymous benefactor who leased the building to GRACE. The new building has more classrooms and ten acres of grounds.

On August 28, the school welcomed local Diocese, Norbertine, GRACE System leaders, and others for the official school blessing. Attendees included Bishop David Ricken, Abbott Dane Radecki, O. Praem., GRACE President Kimberly A. Desotell, clergy members and Norbertine priests, as well as the members of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross community. These Sisters represent the founding order of the school, whose generations of dedicated sister-teachers paved the way for the education that is provided today.

Bishop Ricken walked through the school's new



halls, offering a special blessing to every student, faculty, and classroom, honoring Holy Cross' rich history of over 100 years and praying for all who will learn and grow in the new space for years to come.

Principal Kari Peterson says that the school is maintaining its existing plans, including school schedules, teachers, and bus systems.

She explains, "We're trying to keep what has been the foundation of what we've been doing consistently." She adds that the Holy Cross school and Parish community were welcomed to stop by for an Open House on September 13, where visitors took a look around, saw the new facility, checked out classrooms and spaces, and celebrated this exciting new chapter for the school.





A large, colorful stained glass window. The central feature is a large blue circle with a white cross and a smaller white circle inside the cross. The blue circle is surrounded by a border of various colored glass pieces, including green, yellow, orange, and blue. The entire window is set within a dark wooden frame.



The Power of an Authentic Catholic Community

By Kimberly A. Desotell, President, GRACE

As fall settles around us and the school year moves into full swing, our classrooms and hallways are humming with the active energy of learning growth, and faith in action. The daily rhythms of these early school year weeks serve as a vibrant reminder of what makes the GRACE system so extraordinary: our authentic Catholic community.

At GRACE, we often speak about the strength of our network, but that strength is not found merely in our buildings or our enrollment numbers. It lives in the active intentional partnership between our parents, our parishes, and our educators. True Catholic education is an ongoing collaborative journey. When home, church, and school align with a shared vision we create an environment where children do not simply attend school; they belong to a family grounded in Christ.

Our dedicated teachers and staff work tirelessly to deliver academic excellence, challenge students to reach their highest potential and develop critical thinking skills for the future. Yet, equal to our commitment to academic rigor is our devotion to cultivating a strong spiritual foundation. Through daily prayer, sacramental life, and service to others, our students learn to see the world through the lens of faith, developing moral courage and a heart full of compassion and joy.

This spiritual and academic formation is only possible because of you, our partners. **Parents**, as the primary educators of your children, your trust and daily involvement inspire us. **Parishes**, your spiritual guidance, prayers, and ongoing support anchor our schools in the broader Catholic faith. **Teachers**, your faith-filled vocation shapes the leaders of tomorrow. Together, this network forms an unwavering safety net and a launching pad for our students in their journey.

Scripture reminds us in Ecclesiastes 4:12 that “a cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” Our parents, parishes, and schools form that strong, unbreakable cord.

Thank you for your continued partnership, your prayers, and your commitment to Catholic education through our GRACE Schools. May God continue to bless our important work ahead!

Kimberly A. Desotell
President, GRACE Schools

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920-336-3230 (Middle)
fatherallouezschool.org

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Kari Peterson
920-468-0625
holycrossfamily.org

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Laurie Erickson
920-494-1931
holyfamilyschoolgreenbay.com

NOTRE DAME OF DE PERE

Principal: Mrs. Molly Mares
920-337-1115
notredameofdepere.com

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Jessica Nejedlo
920-336-3091
lourdesschooldepere.org

ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Interim Principal: Mrs. Jessica Wessel
920-468-5026
saintbernardgb.com

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Gerene Thom
920-434-3822
sjbhschool.org

ST. JOHN PAUL II CLASSICAL SCHOOL/ CHESTERTON ACADEMY

Headmaster: Dr. Eric Schreiber
920-617-9542
sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org/

ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Dr. Jamie Tyrrell
920-432-8242
stmorgb.com



Notre Dame Football Program Brings Together GRACE Schools

By Matt Riebe, GRACE Director of Athletics and Activities

This fall, students from eight different GRACE schools came together to play as one team. The Notre Dame of De Pere football team is a shared home for any GRACE 6th-8th grade student that wants to play football. To the NDDP 8th grade coach Andy Sebero, bringing students together across the entire GRACE System is a focal part of the program. "We consider it one of the most meaningful aspects of the program," said Sebero. "It is rewarding to watch friendships form across different GRACE schools that might not have happened otherwise."

The Raiders' football program focuses on teaching the fundamentals of football, building community, and emphasizing player safety. "For many students, this is their first real exposure to organized football, so our focus starts with the basics: proper stance, footwork, tackling technique, blocking form, and an understanding of assignments and positioning," said Sebero. "The coaches take developing the students' fundamentals seriously, not only because sound technique is what allows a player to develop and improve, but because it is directly tied to playing the game safely."

The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade teams face a variety of local public school teams during the season. Many



games are played on high school fields, including Notre Dame Academy who hosts several Raider home games each season. Games are played from early September to mid-October.

"Our hope is that every student leaves the program with a solid technical foundation in the sport, one that will serve them well whether they continue playing in later grades or simply walk away with a real understanding and appreciation of the game," said Sebero.

Interested in signing up for the team? Registration for the fall 2027 opens in January on the Notre Dame of De Pere SportsEngine page. Contact ndraiderathletics@gmail.com with any questions.

First Day of School



St John the Baptist



St. John Paul II



St. John Paul II



Father of Allouez



Holy Cross

Student Standards-at-a-Glance Available



As the 2026-27 school year begins, GRACE Curriculum Director Laura Van Sambeek announces that updated Standards-at-a-Glance documents are now available on the GRACE website.

Curriculum standards are put out by the Diocese of Green Bay for all subjects, and are used in every school except for GRACE St. John Paul II Classical School and Chesterton Academy of St. John Paul II Classical School, as they have specialized classical education standards.

“These documents are a parent-friendly way to explain our standards,” Van Sambeek explains. “It’s a nice snapshot of what students will be learning in every subject area as they progress through GRACE. Not only are you seeing what they learn, but you’re also seeing the vertical alignment of the skills they’re building on from one grade to the next.”

A recent curriculum review with the Art and Music teacher teams prompted an update of those specific subjects areas’ standards and integration. The new standards were chosen based on how well they align with GRACE, as well as our faith alignment that

they promote.

Van Sambeek concludes, “With the standards-at-a-glance documents, parents are able to see how all of our teams and subject areas work together at GRACE to promote an intentional and rigorous vertical alignment from Kindergarten through 8th grade to ensure students are prepared for the next step in their academic journey.”

You can view the documents at:
gracesystem.org/academic-life/instructional-topics

	A	B	C	D
1	WE ARE GRACE!			
2	Kindergarten Topics	K	1	2
3	Share Stories and Feelings through Art (Communication)	X		
4	Look at and Talk about Art (Analyze & Evaluate)	X		
5	Discover Art Clues and Styles (Analyze & Evaluate)	X		
6	Create Art with Various Materials (Appropriate Use)	X		
7	Differentiate between 2D and 3D Art (Appropriate Use)	X		
8	Explore Patterns, Stamping, and Weaving (Appropriate Use)	X		
9	Discover Art in the World and in your Neighborhood (Catholic Traditions)	X		
10	Express Catholic Traditions through Art (Faith Integration)	X		
11	Learn how Artists Organize their Work (Features of Visual Art)	X		
12	Learn the Fundamental Building Blocks of Art (Features of Visual Art)	X		
13	Grade 1 Topics			
14	Express Stories, Feelings, and Imagination through Art (Communication)		X	
15	Analyze Subject Matter and Share Opinions (Analyze & Evaluate)		X	
16	Decode Visual Cues, Moods, and Genres (Analyze & Evaluate)		X	
17	Use Lines and Shapes to make Designs (Appropriate Use)		X	
18	Compare 2D and 3D Art Forms (Appropriate Use)		X	
19	Practice Pattern Printing and Structural Weaving (Appropriate Use)		X	
20	Examine Art from different Communities and Cultures (Catholic Traditions)		X	

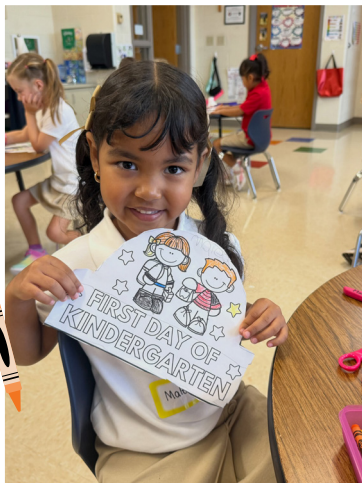


St. Thomas More

Our Lady of Lourdes



Notre Dame de Pere



St. Bernard



Holy Family



Holy Family

Celebrating Excellence: Announcing our 2026 GRACE Educator Award Recipients

Every day in our GRACE schools, dedicated educators inspire minds, cultivate faith, and model excellence. Today, we proudly recognize those whose commitment elevates our entire system.

2026 Top Teacher Talent Awards Recognizing exemplary teaching, these awards provide recipients with a \$1,000 stipend for classroom work. These teachers serve as models of dedication, innovation, and impact.

- **Father Allouez:** Jennifer Gracer, Caitlin Zedler
- **Holy Cross:** Madalyn Giordana, Christina Caliebe
- **Notre Dame:** Christina Henkel, Jennifer Kopp, Jessica West
- **Our Lady of Lourdes:** Jessica Johnson
- **St. Bernard:** Amy Robinson, Jason Beyer, Sarah LaFrombois-Pethan, Lenora Peper
- **St. John the Baptist:** Jill Buckett, Sarah Peterson, Alex Giese, Tara Wildenberg, Kristin Barnhart, Brianna Kaas, Timothy Kozlovsky
- **St. Thomas More:** Julie Julian

The 2026 Abbot Dane Radecki Award: Chosen by all nine GRACE principals, this award recognizes outstanding leadership, institutional dedication, and spiritual growth.

We are thrilled to present this honor to



Top Teacher Talent Award Recipients



Abbot Dane Radecki Award Winner:

Mrs. Sarah Pethan - St. Bernard Catholic School

Mrs. Sarah LaFrombois-Pethan of St. Bernard School for her exceptional mentorship, proactive community partnerships, active faith, and instructional innovation!

Special Feast Days for the Fall

By Anja Marshall, GRACE Web Content Specialist

The Saint of the Day Calendar remembers the feast days of Catholic saints throughout the year.

Our own school, GRACE St. John Paul II Classical School, is honored to be named after Pope Karol Wojtyla, elected in 1978 as the first non-Italian pope in more than 400 years. He was known for his love of young people, and he established World Youth Day. He was canonized in 2014 by Pope Francis.

Teachers at the school conduct different activities



to celebrate his feast day each year, some of which include athletic and outdoor endeavors.

St. John Paul II was a lover of these activities, so older students get to enjoy going outside for a kickball game, while the younger students embark on a nature walk to observe the outdoors.

Art classes have created works to reflect the patron, including making papal mitres (hats), puppets, and drawings of St. John Paul II. In the past, students have even gotten to enjoy the saint's favorite dessert, kremówka papieska, or papal cream cake, in his honor!



Full Circle in Faith

By Samantha Nachtwey, GRACE Director of Marketing and Communications

When teacher Mrs. Kaas walks the halls of St. John the Baptist School (SJB), she is doing more than starting her workday; she is returning home. As an alumna of St. John the Baptist (2010), Notre Dame Academy (2014), and St. Norbert College (2021), Mrs. Kaas's journey illustrates the power of a connected Catholic ecosystem made possible through CatholicLink. Today, she sits in the very classrooms where her own education began, serving as a third-grade teacher and nurturing the next generation of faithful leaders.

Mrs. Kaas's foundation was built within the Green Bay Area Catholic Education (GRACE) system at SJB, where she learned that faith is meant to be lived out together. From singing in the parish children's choir to participating in middle school service projects at Paul's Pantry, she experienced early on how a school and parish function as an extended family. This strong sense of belonging carried her confidently into Notre Dame Academy for high school and later to St. Norbert College. While earning her Master's degree in Liberal Studies at St. Norbert College, Mrs. Kaas deepened her appreciation for the Norbertine tradition of *communio*, or living and learning in a shared community.

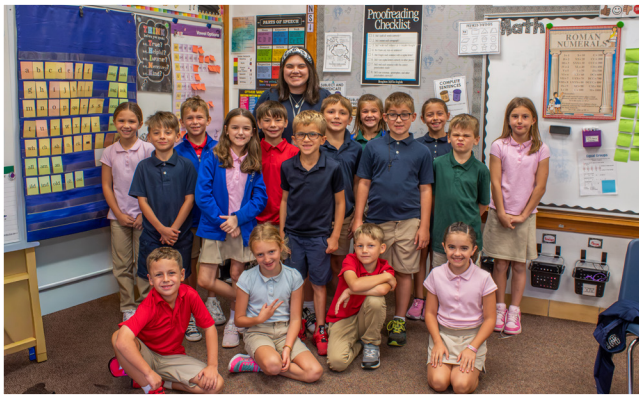
"Being an educator for GRACE has shown me what teaching the whole person looks like," Mrs. Kaas



shares. "My faith isn't separate from my job here; it is lived out in everything I do. You don't just teach children subjects, you have the opportunity to shape the kind of people they become in terms of academics, character, and faith."

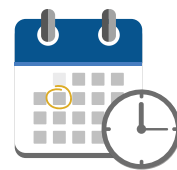
Now back at SJB, Mrs. Kaas brings that commitment directly into her third-grade classroom. She seamlessly blends faith, service, and academic rigor into her daily routines to create a warm, supportive environment. Her students build intergenerational connections across the parish by writing Advent letters and crafting gifts for homebound parishioners. She also guides her class on an annual Lenten pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, helping young learners connect with local Catholic history while growing together in their faith.

Mrs. Kaas's full-circle journey highlights how CatholicLink surrounds local children with a supportive village. By uniting GRACE Schools, Notre Dame Academy, and St. Norbert College, CatholicLink offers families a continuous faith-filled pathway from Pre-K through higher education. Shared facilities, joint events, and collaborative professional development keep families, educators, and parishes closely connected across Greater Green Bay. This year, Mrs. Kaas is further strengthening these local ties by representing SJB in the CatholicLink Leadership Academy alongside fellow educators.





Academic Calendar October 2026 - December 2026



OCTOBER 2026

10/27: Parent/Teacher Conferences

10/29: Early Dismissal - Parent/Teacher Conferences

10/30: No School

11/9: No School - Diocesan In-Service

11/20: Early Dismissal - Teacher In-Service

11/26-11/27: No School - Thanksgiving Break

NOVEMBER 2026:

11/7: Our Lady of Lourdes Light up
Lourdes Night

DECEMBER 2026:

12/24-12/31: No School:
Christmas Break

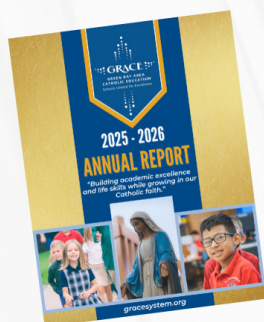
Weather Alerts:

Please be alert to updates from your GRACE school in the event bad weather forces a "snow day" or early dismissal.

2026-27 Annual Appeal

St. Mary of the Angels

The 2026-27 Annual Appeal Has Launched! Our 2026-27 campaign kicked off the weekend of September 19-20! During the event, GRACE educators, parents, parishioners, and community members shared at Masses across GRACE why Catholic education matters and why they choose to support our schools. This year, the Annual Appeal places a special focus on strengthening and elevating educator compensation, supporting our ability to recruit, retain, and equip those at the heart of our mission. Every day, our educators inspire, guide, and care for our students - shaping young minds, hearts, and souls. Appeal gifts also help enhance the programs, resources, and opportunities that make an exceptional Catholic education possible. Together, across 9 schools and 23 parishes, we are helping usher generations of students forward as faithful disciples, preparing them to lead, serve, and live out their faith. Scan the QR code to partner with us for the 2026-27 Annual Appeal!



The 2025-26 Annual Report IS NOW AVAILABLE!

<https://gracesystem.org/about-us/annual-reports/>

LET US HELP YOU

Call 920-499-7330 ● E-mail graceoffice@gracesystem.org ● Mail 1822 Riverside Drive, Green Bay, WI 54301

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