

ST. CROIX LUTHERAN ACADEMY

BAND

Grade School



Handbook

St. Croix Lutheran Academy is pleased to provide a band program for several grade schools! The goal is to provide a well-rounded and full instrumental music program that leads students to use their God-given musical talents to the fullest while having an educational and enjoyable experience. By the end of eighth grade, students should be well prepared to use their talents in a high school band at SCLA or any other high school.

Participating Schools:

Christ, North St. Paul

Christ, Zumbrota

Crown of Life, West St. Paul

Good Shepherd, Burnsville

Resurrection, Rochester

Salem, Stillwater

St. John's, Red Wing



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Overview

BAND! I've always felt that band should be written in capital letters and have an exclamation mark behind it (BAND!). Both as a student and educator, no activity in my experience has provided more learning, wonderful relationships, and enjoyment than BAND! Among many other things, BAND! is a special way for God's children to use the gifts He has provided to Praise the Lord. BAND! is incredibly educational, a great social experience, and, with plenty of practice and good instruction, extremely rewarding. Director John Fenske

Praise the Lord.

Praise God in his sanctuary;

Praise him in his mighty heavens.

Praise him for his acts of power;

Praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,

Praise him with the harp and lyre,

Praise him with tambourine and dancing,

Praise him with strings and flute,

Praise him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath

Praise the Lord!

Psalms 150

Lessons

The core of the program is lessons that are scheduled with the assistance of the principal during the school day. All students receive personalized instruction throughout the day either in a private lesson or small group. Students are provided with music and folders. Some schools have larger group lessons for advanced students and, if enrollment warrants, a separate beginner band. These rehearsals are also conducted during the school day. Students are provided with music and folders.

Concerts

All the 6th-8th grade school band students will combine for two major concerts, **Monday, December 15, 2025, 6:00 p.m.** at SCLA and **Thursday, May 7, 2026, 6:30 p.m.** in the SCLA gym. These concerts provide an opportunity for students to perform with a full ensemble. To prepare for the concerts, it is a goal to have at least three rehearsals with the combined band during the school day at SCLA.

Another joint opportunity is the *Band Concert* on **Sunday, March 1, 2026, 2:30 p.m.** which all the students within their association will be invited to participate. Rehearsals for this concert will take place during the school day.

Students receiving instruction from SCLA will also be asked to participate in the *Twin Cities Fine Arts Festival*, a solo and ensemble competition, at SCLA on **Saturday, April 11, 2026.**

Books and Concert Music

Lesson books are provided by the teacher and may be kept by the student. The lesson book used for beginners is *Traditions of Excellence Book 1*. As students advance, they will be given the next books in the series or other methods specific to their instrument

Concerts music will be provided by the teacher but must be returned when the student is finished or at the end of the year. **The student is responsible for replacing any lost books or music.**

A student may purchase other books of personal interest (pop songs, Disney books, etc.) and is encouraged to bring the books to the lessons.

Instruments & Accessories

Band students must provide their own instruments and supplies. Groth Music in Bloomington is the recommended music store for instrument rental/purchase. There are other excellent music stores in the metropolitan area, including Schmitt Music and Ekroth Music, and parents may choose to use them. We have found Groth to be dependable, reliable, and fair. Some of the more expensive instruments, e.g., tuba, baritone saxophone, etc., may be provided by the school as the student advances.

PLEASE DO NOT PURCHASE INSTRUMENTS ONLINE WITHOUT CONSULTING THE INSTRUCTOR! Many of the “cheaper instruments” found online are not of good quality and make it very difficult or impossible for the student to learn properly. There are good brands to look for when purchasing online, but it is strongly recommended to purchase or rent from a local music store.

Yamaha band instruments are a preferred brand of instrument to rent or purchase and maintains the most consistency among student-level instruments. If you have a used instrument you would like the student to use, please check with your instructor to see if the instrument is of good quality. You may also check with one of the listed music stores to see if any maintenance or cleaning should be done to the instrument.

Music accessories and cleaning supplies are important to any instrument. It is important to have all the necessary accessories and cleaning supplies at the first lesson. It is highly recommended to have a music stand for practice to facilitate proper playing position and posture.

First-Year Student Supplies Needed:

Instrument	Brand Preference	Supplies
Flute	Yamaha, Jupiter	Swab, cleaning rod
Clarinet	Yamaha, Vito, Selmer	Reeds (Rico Royal, Rico 2 1/2), swab, mouthpiece brush, cork grease, Reed Gard
Saxophone	Yamaha, Vito, Selmer, Cannonball	Reeds (Rico Royal, Rico 2 1/2), swab, mouthpiece brush, cork grease, Reed Gard
Trumpet	Yamaha, Jupiter, (no Getzen student trumpets)	Valve oil, slide crease, mouthpiece brush, snake
Trombone	Yamaha, Jupiter	Slide oil, mouthpiece brush, slide grease or oil
Baritone	Yamaha, Jupiter	Valve oil, mouthpiece brush, snake, slide grease
French Horn(single)	Holton, Yamaha	Mouthpiece Brush, rotor oil, slide grease
Oboe	Yamaha, Selmer	Medium-soft reeds (Jones, Lescher Emerald)
Percussion: Bell kit	Ludwig, Yamaha, Vic Firth	Drum sticks, mallets, practice pad (may come with bell kit)

Fees and Payment

The cost of the program is **\$500 for the year** due at registration. You can register and pay online at StCroixLutheran.org/GSBand. The fee does not cover the entire cost of the program, but SCLA provides a substantial subsidy. The fee is for the entire program, not just for lessons.

Guarantee/Make-Up Lessons

24 lessons per school year are guaranteed at the student's grade school. Some weeks may be designated where lessons will not be given. This provides flexibility for illness and snow days.

Students who are sick or forget their instrument will be charged a lesson if the instructor is there to give the lesson. Make-up lessons may be scheduled if the instructor is available. Please contact your instructor to schedule make-up lessons.

Expectations

Fundamentals.

Posture, hand position, breathing/sticking, rhythm, counting, and the like are essential for student progress and enjoyment. Students are expected to take time to thoroughly practice and master fundamentals.

Practice, practice, practice!!!

Students thrive when making progress and doing well. A lack of practice results in little progress which results in a lack of learning, satisfaction, and enjoyment. *The minimum expectation is 15 minutes a day for five days a week for beginners, 100+ minutes a week for advanced players.* In most cases, a new song or etude needs to be practiced at least 15-20 times before it is mastered.

Care of instruments.

Careless handling of an instrument can cause serious and expensive repairs. A well-maintained and clean instrument performs well and retains value.

Remember Band Day!

During their busy week, it happens that students can forget their instrument and/or music on band day. Parents are asked to help with this.

Have Fun!

It is the goal of your instructor to make band an enjoyable experience for everyone involved and is committed to succeeding in that goal!

Thank You

Thank you to the parents for your support of this program and all you do to make music possible in the schools. Thank you to all principals and classroom teachers. Band can create disruption to classroom schedules. The patience and cooperation of faculties and principals is fantastic and is deeply appreciated! Without this spirit of cooperation, the program could not function.

About the Directors

Mr. Andrew Kramer serves as the middle school band instructor at St. Croix Lutheran Academy. He is a graduate of Martin Luther College with an instrumental music degree, as well as vocal music. He previously served as the 7th grade teacher at Peace Lutheran School in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. His primary instrument is the tuba, and he also loves teaching the rest of the instruments. This is his first year at SCLA, and he is looking forward to working with the grade schools and being a part of the SCLA ministry!



Mr. John Fenske serves as the middle school and high school band director at SCLA. He is a graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran College (Milwaukee Wisconsin) with an Instrumental Music Education degree and has had experience at all levels throughout his college experience. In 2021 he completed his Masters of Music Education from the American Band College through Central Washington University. His primary instrument is trumpet, but he loves teaching all the instruments. This is his 12th year at SCLA, and he enjoys being a part of the SCLA ministry and working with all the area grade schools.



Dates to Remember

Monday, December 15, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Christmas Concert, SCLA Chapel

Sunday, March 1, 2026, 2:30 p.m.
Winter Band Concert, SCLA Gym

Saturday, April 11, 2026
Twin Cities Fine Arts Festival, SCLA
(all band students encouraged to participate)

Thursday, May 7, 2026, 6:30 p.m.
Spring Concert, SCLA Gym

Contact Information

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May the Lord richly bless our BAND!



Band program website.

1200 Oakdale Avenue | West St. Paul, MN 55118
StCroixLutheran.org/GSband