

St Michael Lutheran School

Music Department Handbook



Melissa Taylor, General Music, Department Chair

Stacy Bower, Director of Bands

Jenny Maske, Director of Choir

Teacher Contact Information

Please reach out to your music teacher if you have any questions or concerns. If you feel there is something we should know about your student, please share. We are here to help and want to do what we can to help our students be successful.

Melissa Taylor

General Music/ Worship Team/ Drama

Available at St Michael Tuesdays and Thursdays

Email: melissa.taylor@mail.com

Facebook Messenger through the Band Facebook Page

St. Michael Lutheran School Band and Choir

Stacy Bower

Band

Available at St Michael Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons

Email: sbower@mightymessengers.org

Facebook Messenger through the Band Facebook Page

St. Michael Lutheran School Band and Choir

Jenny Maske

Choir

Available at St Michael Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons

Email: jmaske@mightymessengers.org

Facebook Messenger through the Facebook Page

St. Michael Lutheran School Band and Choir

Member Handbook

Martin Luther's lifelong love of music was accompanied by an in-depth musical education. He knew secular and sacred songs from an early age, played the lute, and sang in the convent when he was a monk, as a husband and father with his family, and as a professor with his students. Music was an indispensable part of his life.

Like Luther, St Michael Lutheran School strongly believes in the importance of music education, advocating for its inclusion in school and viewing it as crucial for both spiritual and intellectual development. We see music as a gift from God, a powerful tool for expressing faith, and a valuable discipline alongside theology.

Benefits of Music Education

Participating in band or choir offers numerous benefits, including personal and social growth, improved musical skills, and enhanced well-being. It's a great way to develop discipline, teamwork, and communication skills while also providing a creative outlet and a sense of belonging.

Here's a more detailed look at the benefits:

Personal Growth:

Discipline and Responsibility:

Participating in band or choir requires consistent practice and dedication, teaching valuable life skills like commitment and responsibility.

Confidence Building:

Performing in front of others, whether it's a concert, festival, or school event, helps build confidence and stage presence.

Emotional Expression:

Music provides a powerful outlet for expressing emotions and feelings.

Cognitive Development:

Studies show that music education can improve memory, problem-solving abilities, and even math skills, according to some educational sources.

Stress Relief:

Engaging in musical activities, especially singing or playing an instrument, can reduce stress and improve mood.

Social Benefits:

Community and Belonging:

Band and choir create a strong sense of community, fostering friendships and a sense of belonging.

Teamwork and Collaboration:

Playing or singing together in an ensemble requires teamwork and cooperation, developing valuable social skills.

Social Interaction:

You'll have opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals who share your passion for music, both inside and outside of school.

Making Friends:

Band and choir provide a fun and engaging way to meet new people and build lasting friendships.

Musical Benefits:**Improved Musical Skills:**

Band and choir offer opportunities to improve vocal or instrumental skills, music reading, and musical memory.

Music Appreciation:

Participating in music programs can deepen your appreciation for music and its various forms.

Creative Expression:

Music allows for creative expression and exploration, providing a unique way to connect with your emotions and artistic side.

In conclusion, joining band or choir offers a wealth of benefits, from personal growth and improved musical skills to enhanced social connections and overall well-being. It's an enriching experience that can positively impact your life in many ways.

K-4 General Music

The main goal of the St Michael General Music Program is

To glorify God with our voices

We will do this by:

- ♪ Building a foundation for music literacy
(learning to read and understand music notation and lyrics)
- ♪ Exploring music using our voices and movement
- ♪ Learning to appreciate music as a form of expression
(we don't have to like it to understand and appreciate the art)

The approach to each of these goals will be developmentally appropriate for each grade level.

Students at the elementary level will experience music though:

- ♪ Classes twice a week incorporating listening, movement, creating and performing.
- ♪ Singing at St Michael Lutheran Church Worship Services
- ♪ Performing at Assisted Living Centers
- ♪ Experiencing the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra through visiting ensembles as well as KSO provided curriculum and a performance at Miller Auditorium.
- ♪ Performing at the PTL Pancake Breakfast and other school sponsored events
- ♪ Spring Concert preparation and performance

To name a few!

Music Department Offerings



Drama Club

A club for students in **grades 3-8**. Auditions are held in the fall for the musical, which is generally performed in the winter. Practices are held after school on Tuesdays. More information will be sent by email in the fall.

Directed by Melissa Taylor and Annie Hecht

Worship Team



A club for students in **grades 5-8** who still enjoy singing in an informal setting. Practices are held twice a week during school. Team members will help lead worship at many Friday Chapel services, as well as being invited to sing at school events throughout the year.

Directed by Melissa Taylor



Fourth Grade Pre-band

Fourth grade students will participate in “Pre-band” in addition to general music. Pre-band will focus on learning breath support and articulation as well as developing reading skills through Recorder performance. The class will also provide students with the opportunity to experience the physical requirements needed to play each of the band instruments. This will help them to make an educated decision about the instrument they will play in Band

Taught by Stacy Bower

Band

Beginning Band is designed for students with **little or no previous instrumental experience**. Students will choose a band instrument and learn the fundamentals of music, including tone production, note reading, rhythm, and basic ensemble playing. Emphasis is placed on developing good habits, listening skills, and teamwork. Students will participate in rehearsals and introductory performances, offering their developing musical gifts in a way that honors God and contributes to the school community.

Intermediate Band is for students who have completed **at least one year of band instruction** or have equivalent experience. Students will continue developing technical skills on their instrument, expand their music reading ability, and refine ensemble techniques such as balance, blend, and intonation. The repertoire will be more challenging and varied. Students will perform in concerts, chapel services, and other school functions, using their musical growth to glorify God and serve others through music.

Concert Band is designed for **experienced middle school** musicians who demonstrate a high level of commitment and skill. Students will perform advanced middle school repertoire, focus on musical interpretation, leadership within the ensemble, and prepare for potential high school participation. Performances will include school concerts, chapel services, and community events. Students are encouraged to view their musical gifts as a form of worship and service, offering excellence in music to the glory of God.

Choir

Choir is a vocal music ensemble offered to **seventh and eighth grade** students. The focus is on developing students' singing abilities, music literacy, and ensemble skills. Students will explore a variety of sacred and secular choral literature, with an emphasis on worship and ministry through music. Regular rehearsals prepare the choir to sing for chapel services, concerts, and other school and community events. The choir nurtures a sense of unity, service, and spiritual expression, encouraging students to use their voices to praise God and uplift others.

Music Class Rules

Music Classes are **One Rule** Classes

BE YOU!



However, if what you're doing

Interferes with learning



Hurts someone

Or

Prevents you from being your best self...

You Shouldn't Be Doing It!



Band/Choir Expectations

- ♪ **Be on Time** You must be in the classroom at the designated start time for your assigned class. You will have five minutes to set up and be ready to begin. Bathroom breaks will need to happen during designated times or after speaking with your music teacher.
- ♪ **Be Prepared** You must have all required materials for class every time we meet. See the individual Music class list of required materials.

Practice Part of being prepared is practicing at home and learning your part so we can spend rehearsal time putting it all together and turning the notes into music.
- ♪ **Be Ready to Make Music** You must be ready to learn. We meet only a few times a week, so we need to be open to learning every meeting. We all have bad days, and we will try our best to leave as much as we can outside the music room and let the music run the rehearsal.
- ♪ **Be a Team Player** As an ensemble, we rely on the talents of everyone in the room. To feel safe enough to perform in front of others, everyone must feel encouraged and supported. Criticism or making fun of someone else will not be tolerated. Encouragement will allow for the confidence needed to perform our best.

It is said that "Bach gave us God's word. Mozart gave us God's laughter. Beethoven gave us God's fire. God gave us Music that we might pray without words." With Respect and Encouragement everyone will have the opportunity to find the talent God gave each of you!

Grading

Band and Choir are Performance Based classes. Everything we do cultivates into some sort of public performance. Performances are therefore required and a large part of the overall grade. However, grades will be earned in multiple ways:

- ♪ Performances are mandatory. In case of an emergency or unavoidable situation reach out to your music teacher.
 - ♪ Practice is the only way to improve. All practice assignments are used to prepare for the performance. The entire ensemble relies on every individual doing his/her part.
 - ♪ Behavior/Participation affects rehearsal and performances. Everyone is expected to come to class ready to rehearse so the entire class can successfully prepare for the performance.
 - ♪ Other Assignments the music teacher feels will enhance students' musical education
- ♪

St Michael "Special" classes are graded using a Credit/No Credit system. To receive Credit in Band and Choir, students must earn **an average of 75% or higher** in all the required assignments and performances. A 75% Credit in all Specials (Band/Choir, Art, and Gym) will qualify students for **Honor Roll**.

To be eligible for **High Honors**, students must earn **an average of 85% or higher** in all the required assignments and performances.

Honor Roll = As and Bs in all classes and Credit in all Specials (75% Credit only applies in Specials, students must earn a B or Higher in all other classes)

High Honor = All As in all classes and Credit with an 85% or higher in all Specials. (85% only applies to specials, students must receive an A in all other classes)

Band Grade Example:

+Band practice assignments receive 10 points each in the gradebook. 10 assignments = 100 points (average for 1 song)

+A Performance receives 300 points each in the gradebook. (divided in half if there is an afternoon and evening performance)

+A performance usually consists of 4 pieces per band. That could be 40 assignments, or 400 points possible.

400 Practice points + 300 Performance Points = 700 Total.

If the student does not complete any practice assignments, the highest grade possible will be 57% (No Credit)

If a student does not perform (unexcused), the highest grade possible will be 43% (No Credit)

We understand there may be circumstances that could affect a student's ability to participate. Please communicate with your child's music teacher if they need to be excused.

(excused = unavoidable, death, once in a lifetime, major events. Excused is not a practice or something that can be worked around. Every coach understands scheduling conflicts happen. Just talk to them and talk to us, we will make it work the best we can.)

We see every student as an individual. Grades will never be based on talent. However, talent can be discovered through effort, maybe some hard work and determination! It is through that effort and hard work that students will earn their grades.

Materials Needed

Band

- ♪ **Quality instrument** that is well maintained and in good playing condition
- ♪ **Binder/Folder** that contains all distributed music as well as the designated book for rehearsals. Every band member must bring their own music in a folder or binder to class for every meeting) We share stands and may share music but we must be prepared if our stand partner is absent.
- ♪ **Equipment** necessary for your specific instrument
 - Flute: Cleaning rod for tuning and swab for cleaning
 - Clarinet/Saxophone: At least 2 good reeds at all times. (Be prepared in case one breaks.) Cork Grease, Cleaning Swab
 - Brass: Valve oil
 - Percussion: 1 pair 1A or 2B Snare Drumsticks, 1 pair plastic bell mallets.
- ♪ **Pencil** on your stand at every rehearsal (keep a binder pouch with your pencil, reeds, oil, grease.... In your binder?)

Choir

- ♪ **Binder/Folder** to keep music and class assignments
- ♪ **Notebook** for class notes and assignments
- ♪ **Pencil** for every class

Stands and folders will be provided. Pencils are available if yours is forgotten but you must grab them before rehearsal begins. Binders do not need to be bigger than 1” and are needed for outdoor performances and always recommended for everyone.

Uniform Requirements

In order to set our student performers up for success, uniforms are required for all Band and Choir groups at every performance. They help to put us into performance mode and take away distractions that inhibit the focus on the music. The Concert band and Choir perform at Festival and may travel to other sites and therefore are expected to dress a little more formal.

♪ Beginning/ Intermediate Bands

Black from the waist down
pants or skirts (middle of the knee or longer),
socks or tights and
black shoes.

Blue school provided T-shirt

♪ Concert Band and Choir

Concert Black

Girls: All Black including shirt, pants/skirt (knee length or longer),
socks/tights and shoes

Boys: Black Dress Pants, White dress Shirt

Black Socks, Shoes and Tie

Sweatpants/Gym Pants are never appropriate for performances. Leggings may only be worn under a skirt or a skirt length top. T-shirts must be tucked in.

Important to Remember

SMLS Music programs all use Technology to enhance the curriculum. The following subscriptions are provided to the indicated students free of charge. Please look into what these programs have to offer as they are safe and engaging ways to experience music.



Musicplay is a comprehensive music curriculum designed for early childhood and elementary school-aged children.

Core principles

- **Sequential development:** Musicplay is based on Edwin E. Gordon's Music Learning Theory, emphasizing a sequential approach to music development.
- **Active engagement:** The curriculum encourages children to actively participate in music through singing, moving, listening, playing instruments, and creating music.
- **Building essential skills:** It focuses on developing basic music skills like singing, rhythm chanting, and movement.

Navigate to [Musicplayonline.com](https://musicplayonline.com)

Click on "Student"

Enter the code M503552



MakeMusic Cloud is a powerful, interactive music education platform designed to enhance student learning, practice, and performance. Makemusic Cloud will be used as the platform for at home practice for our Band and Choir Students.

1. Personalized Practice at Home

Allows students to practice with accompaniment tracks, visual notation, and real-time feedback. It highlights incorrect notes or rhythms as students play or sing, encouraging more accurate and efficient practice—just like having a private tutor at home.

2. Tracks Progress and Growth

Tracks individual student progress over time, helping both teachers and students identify strengths and areas that need improvement. This data allows us to tailor instruction and support each student's unique learning path.

3. Access to a Vast Music Library

Access to thousands of high-quality band, choir, and solo pieces—far beyond what we can store physically in our music library. This opens more repertoire options and helps students explore music that matches their level and interests.

4. Flexible and Accessible

MakeMusic Cloud is available 24/7 from any internet-connected device. This flexibility supports consistent practice habits and accommodates varied schedules.

5. Enhances Classroom Instruction

We can spend more class time making music together and less time on tasks that can be practiced individually with feedback. It also supports differentiated instruction, allowing us to challenge advanced students while supporting those who need more guidance.

Navigate to Makemusic Cloud

Log in using stmikeschool.org email or firstnamelastname (no caps or spaces)

Password smls##### (same password they use for devices at school)

2025-2026 Music Dates to Remember

October

12 – Sunday Gr 3, 4 and Worship Team (WT) @ SMLC prolife rally

25 - Saturday K-2 Sing at SMLC Service 5:00

November

4 – Tuesday Drama Club Audition clinic, auditions, script reading....

11 – Tuesday Drama Club Audition clinic, auditions, script reading....

18 – Tuesday Drama Club Audition clinic, auditions, script reading....

TBD Tentative Concert Band Event

December

4 – Thursday CFK/ Preschool Christmas Concert 1:00 and 6:00

11 – Thursday K-3 Christmas Concerts 1:00 and 6:30

15 – Sunday Tentative MS Choir SMLC Service. 8:30

18 – Thursday Possible makeup date for Christmas performances

January

6 – Tuesday Drama Practice 3:00-6:00

13 – Tuesday Drama Practice 3:00-6:00

20 – Tuesday Drama Practice 3:00-6:00

22 – Thursday Winter Concert 1:00 and 6:30

(all Bands, Choir, 4th Grade Recorders)

27 – Tuesday Drama Practice 3:00-6:00

30 – Friday PTL Pastries for Parents and Chapel

February

3 – Tuesday	Drama Practice	3:00-6:00
10 – Tuesday	Drama Practice	3:00-6:00
13 – Friday	SMLS Play Performance	1:00 & 6:30
	Cast Party	until 10:00 P
17 – Tuesday	K-2 Pancake Supper performance	
20 – Friday	Possible makeup date for Play and Cast Party	

March

5 – Thursday	Beginning Band Solo Concert	1:00 & 6:30
22 - Sunday	SMLS Choir @ SMLC Worship Service	8:30 A

April

17 – Friday	Tentative Assisted Living Field Trip	TBD
24 – Friday	Lutheran Schools Band and Choir Festival	
	Held in Stephenville- More info will be sent	
26 – Sunday	Gr. 3, 4 and WT @ SMLC Service	11:00 A

May

14 – Thursday	All school Concert on the Playground!	
21 – Thursday	Rain date for Concert on the Playground	
26 – Tuesday	WT sings at Graduation	

June

6 – Friday	Special Last Chapel	
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