



FEBRUARY 2026 SHINE



Winter Landscape, 1909. Wassily Kandinsky

"But I have calmed and quieted my soul..." Psalm 131:2



A Message from Pastor Ben

In 2008, I traveled to the Holy Land for the first time, to Israel and Palestine. It was an absolutely amazing experience, and as someone who was just getting ready to enter Seminary, I was thrilled to go see all the places where Jesus walked and to actually spend time in the cities of the Bible. Places like Jerusalem, Jericho, and Bethlehem. I will confess to you, though, that in the end I wasn't all that impressed with the ancient buildings, archeological sites, and monuments that I saw on that trip. In some ways, once you've seen one partially standing 2000-year-old pile of rubble, you've seen them all.

What caught hold of me on my trip were not the stones and structures in Palestine, but the people. Our tour group met with pastors and activists, theologians, and local NGO leaders, who told us not only about the land's history but also about the people living there today.

One of those leaders was Rev. Dr. Mitri Rehab, a Lutheran pastor at a small church in Bethlehem. My father and I visited the church on our first Sunday in Palestine, along with a handful of other tourists and 20 or 30 local members. Pastor Mitri was kind enough to

translate his sermon from Arabic into English and to explain the song performed by their Sunday school students for us as part of their summer Bible school program.

I was surprised to discover later in our trip that this pastor of this tiny church in Bethlehem was working on a building project, and not just any building project. This pastor was starting, as he put it, "The largest construction project in Bethlehem since Herod the Great." I've heard pastors brag about their building projects before, but I've never heard anything quite like that!

It was almost 20 years ago that I first heard Rev. Dr. Mitri Rehab speak about his vision for Bethlehem's youth, and I can still hear it in my mind as if it were yesterday. In the years since Rev. Dr. Mitri wrote nearly 50 books on Palestinian culture, politics, and theology, this Bethlehem community has established Dar al-Kalima University. Which was, in fact, the largest new-construction project in Bethlehem in over 2000 years! The university offers programs in art, culture, dance, tourism, film, and videography as well as world-class culinary arts programs.

It's a great honor for me to invite you to meet Rev. Dr. Mitri Rehab in person here at Our Saviour's on February 27th. At 6 p.m., we'll have music from local Palestinian musicians and activists, "The Sumud Collective" featuring Ronnie Malley. We'll hear from Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb at 6:30, and Our Saviour's Art Gallery will be hosting an exhibit titled "The Lilies of Gaza," featuring artwork by 22 Gazan women. I hope you will join me and be inspired by music, by art, and by the wonderful people who live in the land that we call holy.

Blessings!
~ Pastor Ben

We hope you will [register](#) for the Bright Stars of Bethlehem Gala: Rebuilding Hope After the Genocide: The case for Dar-al Kalima University in Palestine today!

“

As Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb
reminds us...

HOPE
is not the denial
of reality, but the
COURAGE
to imagine life
beyond oppression.



Anniversaries and Birthdays



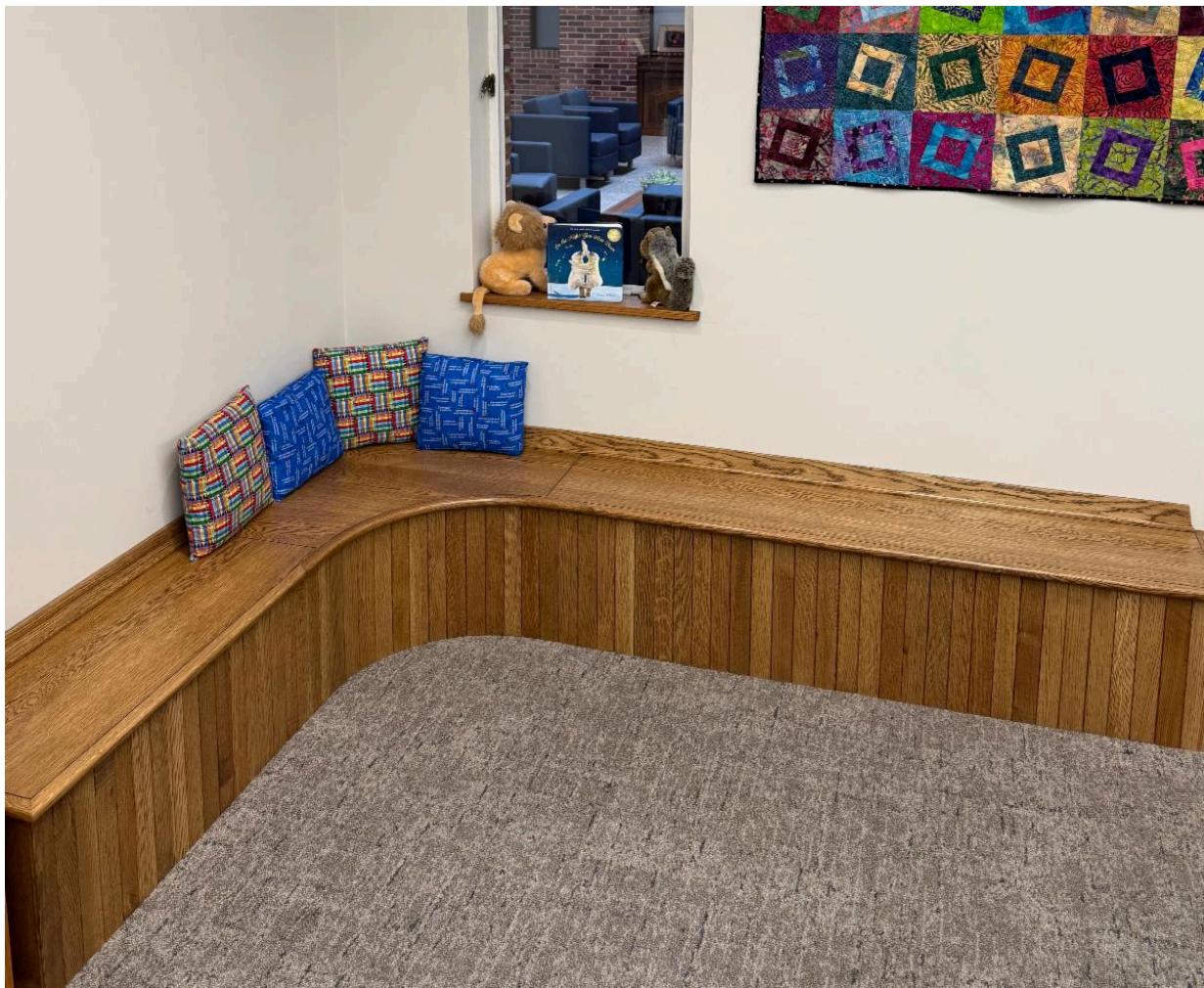
Anniversaries over 40 years:

Hannelore Duenkel
Greg Hooper
Adele Jensen
Barbara Lymangoood
Linda Neff
Ken and Sharon Votava

Birthdays 80 years +

Char Bala
Nick Beskid
Marilyn Broll
Christine Hyatt
Karin Johnson
Tom Johnson
Edith Lee
Marty Rensch
Tom Schneider
Betty Wik

Library News



Anonymous Artistry: Handcrafted with Heart

Written By: Tracy Jackway

Tucked into a quiet corner of our church library is a bench that has been given new life, and with it, a fresh invitation to pause, rest, and linger awhile.

The original bench was designed years ago at the request of former Pastor Tom Grevlos and built to be carpeted. Over time, however, it began to show its age. Recently, a retired woodworking professional, who has asked to remain anonymous and whom I will, for this article, dub “The Banksy of the Bench” (*BoB* for short), shared their time, skill, and thoughtful care to restore it, bringing new life to the beautiful hardwood bench you see today.

This was truly a labor of love. Rather than starting from scratch, *BoB* carefully worked with what was already there, honoring the original design while upgrading it with warm white oak, thoughtful details, and a finish meant to last for years. Every curve, seam, and edge was shaped by hand, with patience and quiet precision. The work was done largely in a home workshop, using both simple machines and hand tools (many of them decades old), drawing on a lifetime of experience as a shop teacher and millwork professional. Support and materials were also generously shared by former colleagues, a testament to the strong community behind this gift.

The result is more than a bench. It's a place to sit with a book, to breathe, to reflect, or to simply enjoy the stillness of the library. We invite you to stop by, take a seat, and read a book or two. With deep gratitude, we thank our very own *BoB* for the generous gift of time, skill, and heart. May it be a place of rest, reflection, and welcome for our community for many years to come.

Remember, books from the church library can be checked out, and you can also browse the full collection anytime through the online catalog on our [website](#).

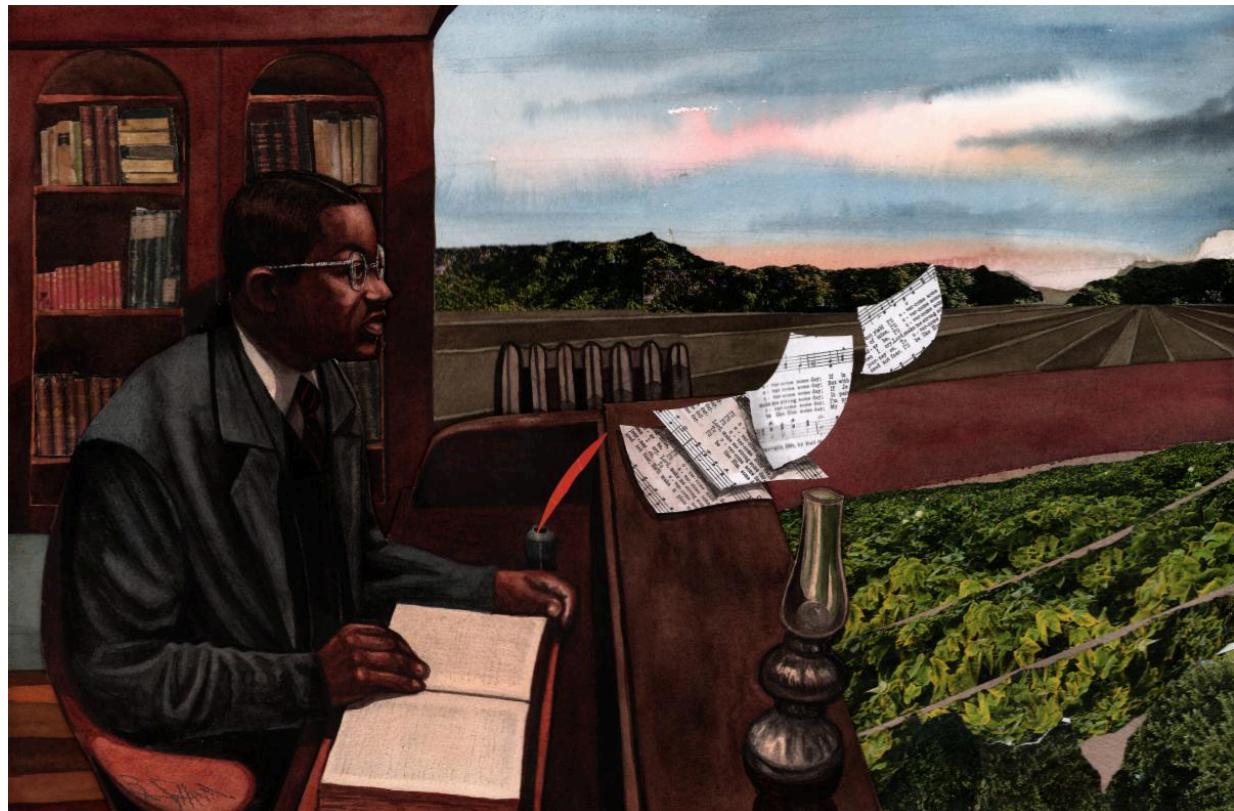
Honoring Black History Month in Worship

Contributed By: Worship Director, Nicholas Davis

We are celebrating the incredible contributions of Black composers and hymn writers to Christian worship throughout the month of February. Each Sunday at our 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services, the opening hymn will feature a work by a Black composer. On February 1, "In Christ There Is No East or West," (ELW 650), Arr. Harry T. Burleigh Baritone. An arranger, Harry Burleigh, introduced African American spirituals to classical audiences and influenced composers like Antonín Dvořák. On February 8, "This Little Light of Mine," (ELW 677), Arr. Horace Clarence Boyer and see our Sanctuary Choir's rendition of "Shine on Me," by Rollo Dilworth, [here](#).

Boyer, a gospel scholar and educator, dedicated his life to preserving the authenticity of gospel music. On February 15, "Beams of Heaven as I Go," (UM Hymnal), by Charles Tindley. Born into slavery, Tindley became a pioneering Methodist minister and hymn writer whose work laid the foundation for modern gospel music. Feb. 22, "Lead Me, Guide Me," (ELW 768), by Doris Akers. Akers was a gospel composer, choir director, and educator whose harmonies and arrangements shaped modern gospel choirs. This month, as we lift our voices in worship, we honor these composers whose music continues to inspire and unite us in faith.

*Image: [Collier, Bryan](#), "By and By: Charles Alan Tindley"



New and Familiar Faces



NEW MEMBERS

The Roper Family

Anna, Jim, and Luke (age 2) Roper moved to Naperville last fall from Chicago. Pastor Anna is ELCA clergy currently on leave from call due to the impending arrival of baby girl Roper in March! Before Luke's birth in September 2023, Anna served as Associate Pastor at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Elmhurst for 6 years, and is a LSTC graduate of the class of 2017. Jim works at CME Group in downtown Chicago, and, as a Raleigh-Durham native, attempts to continue rooting for the Carolina Panthers. Luke's current hobbies include being outside as much as possible, as the weather permits, kicking balls, Hot Wheels, trains, reading, and doing the same 24-48 piece puzzles over and over again. The Ropers have several extended family members in Chicago, and Anna and Luke have also been regularly attending Good Shepherd LC in Oak Park, where Anna's aunt and grandmother are active members. While Anna is currently uncertain as to what exactly her future return plans to full-time parish or other ministry will look like, we are happy right now to be officially becoming a part of Our Saviour's vibrant and active community.



STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Kathy Clolinger

I am the Accounting Manager here at the church and am responsible for processing donations and paying vendor invoices/reimbursements. I joined the church staff in March 2019 and have loved getting to know the people in this community and learning about the ministries and missions.

My husband David and I have lived in Naperville for over 20 years (I am from Ohio, David is from Alabama) and have raised two children – both attended Neuqua Valley High School and Indiana University – Go Hoosiers! (Something I thought I would never say growing up as a Buckeye fan). I love walking on the Riverwalk in Naperville and attending yoga classes (join us on the lower level on Wednesdays at 9:00 am for yoga). My family loves to travel and is planning a trip to Peru this summer to celebrate my son's college graduation. Any travel tips would be greatly appreciated.

Wishing continued success for the many mission events that take place during the year, from the Mozambique dinner, the Slovakia dinner, and the Mega Garage Sale. The enthusiasm and commitment to missions are extraordinary, clearly reflecting a deep passion for service and a heartfelt dedication to sharing God's love through action.

Committee Update

STEWARSHIP

The Stewardship and Endowment Committees were combined as part of the constitution update in 2024. Members of the Stewardship/Endowment committee are elected by the congregation at the annual meeting for two-year terms.

The Endowment Board receives and manages funds and property in the Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Endowment Fund (total assets of \$300,000) and distributes income from the Endowment Fund annually to enhance the mission of the church. The Endowment Fund has been blessed with donations from estates as part of members' planned giving and designation of memorial gifts.

The Stewardship Committee encourages faithful giving, manages the annual stewardship campaign, and focuses on helping people understand, practice, and grow in faithful stewardship of all that God has entrusted to them.

For 2026, Our Saviour's had 194 giving units pledge their support as part of the annual stewardship campaign (down slightly from 201 pledges for 2025). If you are interested in pledging, please reach out to Kathy, Accounting Manager, at 630-281-4226 or accounting@oursaviours.com. The annual stewardship campaign supports the general operations of the church to cover costs, including payroll, administrative, and building upgrades and maintenance.

Missions and Ministries



BABY CARE:

God's Love, Wrapped in Care

Baby Care is a year-round mission of Our Saviour's, rooted in compassion and carried out with incredible care. This ministry serves under-resourced families both locally and around the world through our partnership with Lutheran World Relief. Each fall, as part of God's Work, Our Hands, volunteers gather to assemble more than 500 Baby Care Kits, each one filled with essentials that bring comfort, dignity, and hope to parents welcoming a child in difficult circumstances.

What makes these kits especially meaningful is the love poured into every detail. Members of the Baby Care Mission Team spend countless hours hand-selecting high-quality, like-new garments from local consignment shops, ensuring each item is practical, durable, and gentle for little ones. Handmade



Caring for Creation

Caring for God's creation can start with small, everyday choices, and we are making it easier to do just that. New recycling bins are now available year-round at both campuses for items that are often hard to recycle, like crayons, bread tags, old keys, pop tabs, ink cartridges, and eyeglasses. And during Lent, we're bringing back **BYOM (Bring Your Own Mug)**, a simple invitation to skip the disposable coffee cups and bring a reusable mug from home. Together, these small actions add up to a meaningful way we can care for the world God has entrusted to us.

blankets, carefully sewn cloth diapers, and thoughtfully chosen clothing reflect a deep respect for the families who will receive them.

Locally, Baby Care partners with Bugaboo Consign, Rhea Lane Consignment, Family Shelter Resale, and Our Saviour's Refugee Ministry to support babies ages 6 months to 2 years. Volunteers also gather regularly for Baby Care Workshops, special sew-a-thons, and assembly days, beautiful moments of fellowship, purpose, and shared mission.

Thank you to everyone who donates, sews, shops, organizes, and prays. Through your generosity, God's love is being wrapped around families near and far, one baby, one kit, one act of care at a time.

If you'd like to make a one-time or monthly donation to help the team purchase much-needed hand towels and cloth diapers, you can do so [here](#).

HELLO FEBRUARY

When I think of February
I think of more...
more light, more life
more hope, more faith
nature has no fear
that spring will return
that better days beckon
and neither must we...

Donna Ashworth
Words To Live By



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