

Dear Friends of Valley Grove Preservation Society,

I write this note just as the Valley Grove churches become blanketed by our first real snowfall. As we enter the holiday season and wrap up 2010, we hope you had the opportunity to enjoy the country social in September as well as visits during other seasons.

Seventeen events were held at Valley Grove this year, the upcoming Christmas Eve service will make eighteen: seven weddings, three church services, six meetings or reunions and of course the annual autumn social.

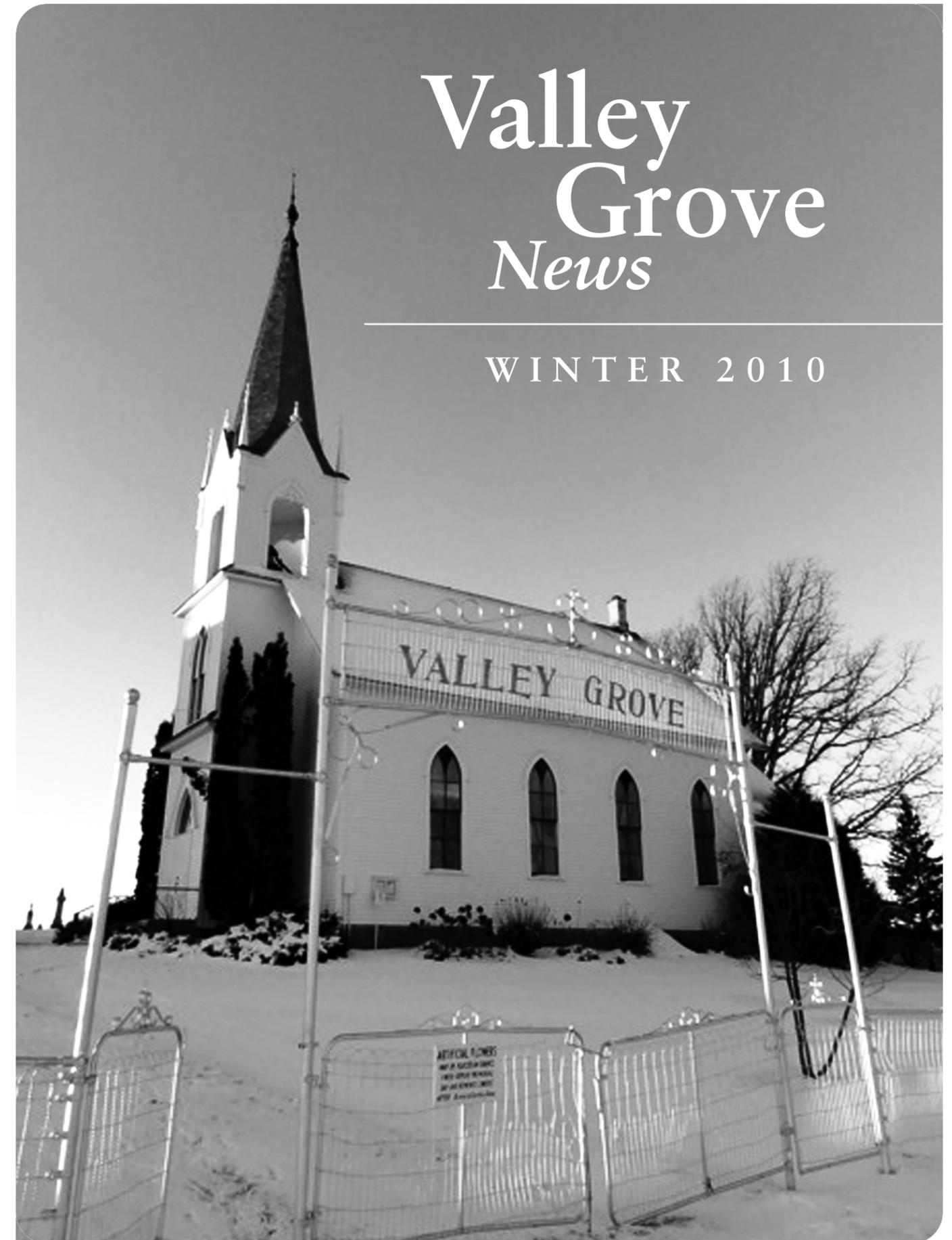
We are still patiently and persistently paying down the debt incurred during the initial phase of the restoration of the stone church. During 2010 so far donations have reduced our note from \$49,000 to \$44,000 by August and now we are down to \$34,000, resulting in a \$15,000 reduction on our loan for the year. We have \$620 in operating funds remaining before printing and sending this newsletter.

The 2010 interest and dividend income from our Elthon-Nelson Endowment Fund is \$4,093. This restricted fund (we can only spend the interest earned) is intended to provide assistance with long-term maintenance costs well into the future. Please consider a donation to this endowment fund.

A tax-deductible gift to VGPS in any amount may be designated as a memorial, as an honorary tree (see <http://valleygrovemn.com/>), or a donation to the 1862 Church Restoration Fund. You may donate by contacting Treasurer Ken Sahlin (507-645-8720), by mail to P.O. Box 75, Nerstrand, MN 55053, or online (see <http://givemn.razoo.com/story/Valley-Grove-Preservation-Society>).

Your board continues to make plans for additional restoration of the 1862 stone church. It still needs flooring, a carved arch and chandelier to match those present in the 19th century, plus a bell, and historic decorative painting. Norwegian woodcarvers Elise and Phillip Odden (<http://arts.state.wi.us/static/folkdir/odden1.htm>) are helping us prepare a draft design for the arch. We also want to enhance displays that tell the stories of Valley Grove. With your support all these projects are possible!

For the Valley Grove Preservation Society,
Gary Wagenbach, President



Valley Grove News

WINTER 2010

God Jul! Christmas Eve at Valley Grove

Our Christmas Eve service features carol singing and the Gospel of Matthew read in English and Norwegian. The Rev. Dr. Todd Nichol of St. Olaf College, former professor of church history at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, will serve as our guest preacher this year. Dr. Nichol is the King Olav V Professor of Scandinavian American Studies at St. Olaf College and serves as editor of the Norwegian-American Historical Society. His most recent book is *Crossings: Norwegian-American Lutheranism as a Transatlantic Tradition*. Reverend Hugh Kaste, a VGPS board member, will serve as liturgist for the service. Music begins at 9:45 p.m. and the service at 10 p.m. We invite everyone to stay after the service to share news, glad tidings and history and, of course, cider, coffee and holiday treats. The heartfelt simplicity of Valley Grove, the historic connections to our immigrant and farming past and the high quality of the music is always a highlight of the holiday season for those who have roots here and those who love and appreciate Valley Grove.

Now Hear This

There's a new sound system in the white church thanks to Pinewood Sound Company. Northfield resident Gerald Williams, owner of the company, generously waived the charge for his assessment and installation of the system, assisted by fellow Bethel Lutherans Bill Lindstrom and Wayne Kivell. They took special care to protect the historic appearance of the church by concealing the wires inside walls, which mean some scrambling around in the crawl space under the sanctuary. Valley Grove has always enjoyed good acoustics, but now they will be even better for our concerts, weddings

and services including the Christmas Eve candle-light service. The system will record and create a CD copy of the ceremony for every couple married there. It will also permit ushers to monitor the volume level of the speaker system from the narthex of the church.

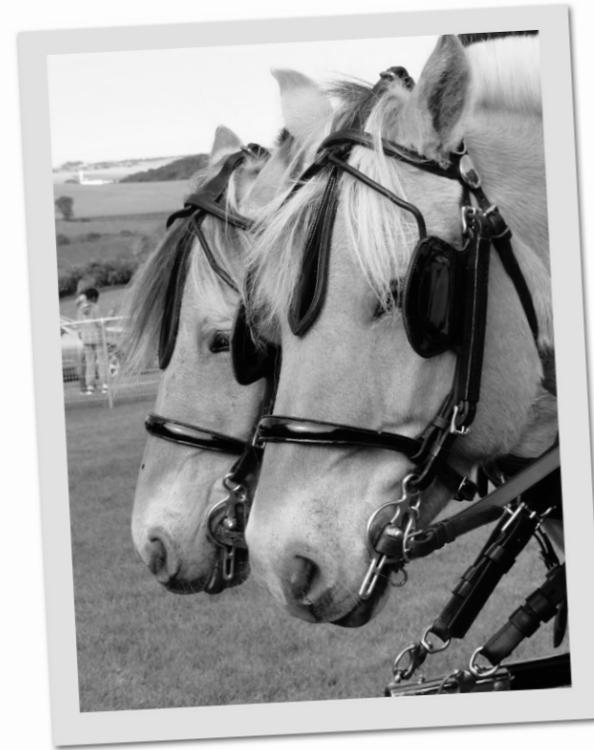
Photo Contest

Valley Grove is photogenic in every season and time of day. If you'd like to send us photographs you've taken over the years—or would like to visit Valley Grove in the coming months and create new ones—we will find good uses for them. And to encourage the effort, we are announcing a Snap Valley Grove contest.

The winners of the first contest will be announced at the 2011 Country Social and their images displayed on the Valley Grove website. The images will become property of the VGPS for use in various ways possibly including note cards or refrigerator magnets. Submit your images to our website: valleygrovemn.com.

Hold Valley Grove in your heart ...

... or in your hand or on your refrigerator. Magnets with new images were for sale at the social and can still be obtained by contacting Treasurer Ken Sahlin (507-645-8720), or by mail to P.O. Box 75, Nerstrand, MN 55053. Send \$4 for each magnet, postage paid. Fans of Valley Grove have enjoyed the charming magnets featuring Shawn Olson's portraits of Valley Grove in spring, summer, autumn and winter. New photographs by Gary Wagenbach ornament the next series of magnets that show our restored churches from a different perspective (shown at <http://valleygrovemn.com>).



Country Social

It was a bright golden autumn day for our annual Valley Grove Country Social on September 19. Under the oak tree, Hütenänny, a Northfield-based music group, provided music from the Nordic countries. Master woodcarver and horseman Phillip Odden of Norsk Woodworks in Barronett, Wisconsin brought examples of his work including a *kubbestol* (traditionally carved Norwegian wooden chair), and he and his son Tor drove a pair of champion Norwegian Fjord horses around the churches and prairie. The silent auction featured art by Fred Somers, Tom Maakestad, John Maakestad, and Shawn Olson. Biologist Gary Wagenbach assisted in identifying flora and fauna for people walking our still-blooming prairie where a team of powerful percherons driven by Bob Mathies of Faribault provided wagon rides. Children took bareback rides on horses provided by board member Karin Winegar of St. Paul. Northfield organists Theo Wee, Richard Collman and Rhonda Reese gave an informal concert on the historic organ in the white church, while goats and chickens from Zeman's Simple Harvest Farm, a Valley Grove neighbor, kept everyone amused and showed folks where cheese comes from.

In Honor/Memory of...

Memorials were given to Valley Grove in honor of our friends Clayton Sorenson, Cora Vesledal and Ardis Groff. And a white oak will be dedicated next spring Gold Finch Grove to honor Joel Hess, who passed away due to a motorcycle accident.

We Appeal to You

If family ties, personal history, Norwegian cultural history or natural beauty draw you to Valley Grove, please share in its preservation and restoration. Tax-deductible gifts may be done easily by going to our website www.valleygrovemn.com and clicking the link there or at <http://givemn.razoo.com/story/Valley-Grove-Preservation-Society>. GiveMN.org is a partner with Charities Review Council and MAP for Nonprofits. It is part of the Razoo.com network and also a 501(c)(3) supporting organization of the Minnesota Community Foundation. Or you may mail checks to Valley Grove Preservation Society P.O. Box 75, Nerstrand MN 55053.

Visit www.valleygrovemn.com to enjoy photos, past newsletters, financial timelines and stories. And please send us your own stories and memorabilia from Valley Grove so we can continue to enrich and preserve its history.

Lastly, we are looking for a spruce or pine tree to be donated for the 2010 Christmas Eve Service. We can arrange pick up and transport. Call Ken (507-645-8720) or Gary (507-645-8549).

Thank You!
valleygrovemn.com