



VALLEY GROVE PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, Fall 2024

<https://valleygrovemn.org>;

Valley Grove Historic Place is registered with the National Park Service

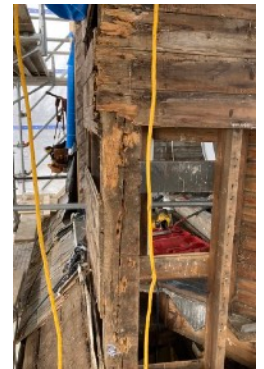
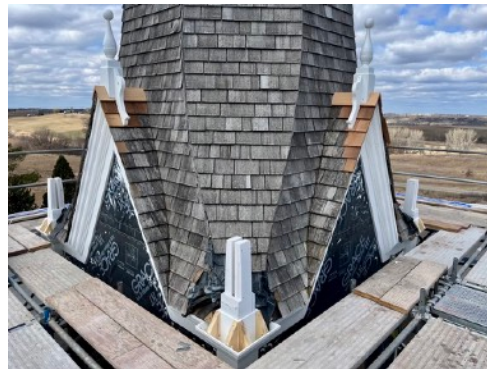
FALL AND WINTER EVENTS

- **Sunday, September 15, 1-4 PM, Country Social:** You are invited to attend the annual Country Social on a beautiful fall day! Nordic music, wagon rides, coffee, goodies, children's activities and more. You can admire the newly renovated steeple and bell tower on the wooden church. Bring your family, neighbors and friends!
- **Sunday, December 8, 4 PM, Vespers service of music and prayer** in preparation of the season ahead, featuring Rob Ryden, Craig Wasner, Maren Wasner, Susan Lohmann, and Charlotte deVries.
- **Tuesday, December 24, 10 PM, Christmas Eve service:** Another treasured holiday tradition for your family with Christmas hymns in English and Norwegian. Welcome!



THE STEEPLE RESTORATION

River City Builders and Millworks Inc. completed a much-needed restoration of the steeple, the bell structure, the east window and the entry to the wooden church. A generous estate gift prompted the restoration work, but more funds are needed to cover the remaining costs of replacing beams, flooring, bell supports and lighting.



Your support for the steeple restoration will have a lasting impact on Valley Grove. Because of the durable materials and fine workmanship of RCBMI, the wooden church's steeple will last for decades to come. See the donations information on page 3.

ANOTHER IMPROVEMENT!

While the steeples on both churches were being repainted in June, former board member and woodworker extraordinaire John Gorder, was making another table from trees at Valley Grove (one stands in the stone church). This table graces the foyer in the wooden church. Thank you, John!



HAPPENINGS AT VALLEY GROVE

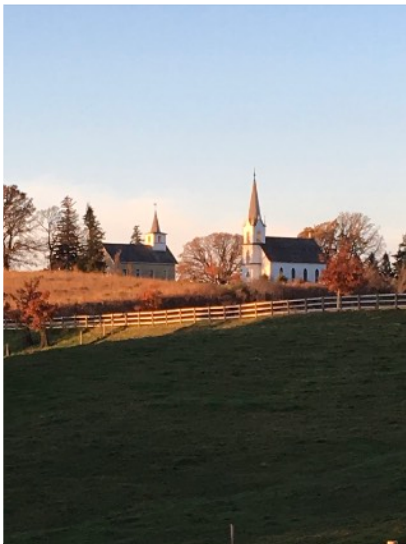


•**Prairie burn:** In early June wind and weather enabled Zumbro Valley Forestry Inc. to burn a portion of the prairie to maintain the native plants while suppressing invasive species. Periodic burns are an important activity in a healthy prairie and oak savanna ecosystem. The deep roots of prairie grasses and bur oaks withstand the surface fires and thrive on the increased fertility that follows.

- **Celebration of Valley Grove weddings:** On June 26 couples who had married at Valley Grove, or their children or parents before them, gathered to celebrate those memorable occasions with wedding photo albums, stories, and wedding portraits. Valley Grove hosts 4-6 weddings annually. For more information about booking a wedding at Valley Grove, see <https://valleygrovemn.org/weddings-events/>.
- **Organ recital:** The Northfield Noon Organ Recital returned to Valley Grove on August 7 with a 45-minute performance by Noah Klein at the keyboard of the recently refurbished 1911 organ.



FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD, Michelle Roethler



As Fall approaches I look forward to the burst of color that surrounds Valley Grove. My favorite view is from our barn! My family and I are blessed to have this incredible and very special view! This summer there were many things happening up on the hill. Weddings, construction projects, upkeep on the prairie, family gatherings, and funerals. Valley Grove is a special site to people for numerous reasons. Serving on the preservation board of a historic church is a rewarding responsibility that combines a love for history, architecture, and community service. As custodians of this treasured spot, we are dedicated to preserving its architectural integrity and historical significance for future generations. My goal for the board is to honor the past, enrich the present, and ensure that its legacy lasts for years to come.

BOARD MEMBERS

Board members 2024-2025: Michelle Roethler, president; Gary Wagenbach, vice president; Ken Sahlin, treasurer; Margit Johnson, secretary; Rene Koester, Shawn Nuebel, Tedd Pederson, Dirk Peterson, Dan Rogness, Shannon Scheill, and Maren Wasner. Ken Vesledahl, President of the Valley Grove Cemetery Board serves an ex officio member. Please email info@valleygrovemn.org if you are interested in serving on the Valley Grove Preservation Society board.

YOUR DONATIONS MATCHED DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR AND A CHANCE AT A TOM MAAKESTAD PAINTING OF VALLEY GROVE!

A generous estate gift and investments paid for two-thirds of the much-needed repairs to the wooden church's steeple and entrance (see photos, page 1). We now turn to you to help us pay for the remainder of the restoration expenses with an extra generous donation. Donations in any amount will be **matched dollar for dollar**, if given



by December 31, 2024. If you donate \$50, the steeple fund will receive \$100; a \$250 gift will yield \$500. **You can make your donation online, using this code, or mail your gift to Valley Grove Preservation Society, Box 75, Nerstrand MN 55053.**

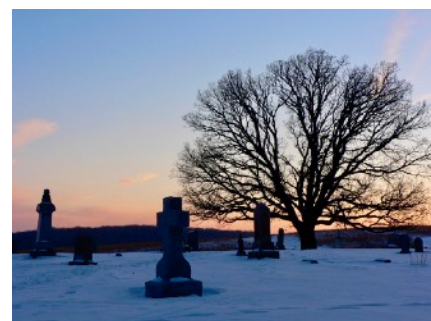
We also offer to especially generous donors an opportunity to “win” a **Tom Maakestad original painting!** Tom grew up near the Valley Grove churches, which his parents John and Bobbie Maakestad helped preserve in the mid 1970s. An internationally known artist Tom (<https://tommaakestad.com/oil-pastel-and-painting>) has painted Valley Grove in many different seasons over the years. He is donating a framed 20x28” original painting as an incentive for donors to give a bit more.

If you donate \$1,000, you will receive one lottery ticket; donate \$5,000 and you will receive two tickets; \$10,000 warrants three tickets, and \$20,000 or more will increase your chances of taking home Tom’s original Valley Grove painting four-fold with *four* tickets. The winning ticket will be selected at the January 8, 2025 board meeting and will be delivered to the winner.

Thank you for your donation in any amount to support the restoration of the wooden church and its steeple!

MEMORIALS

We gratefully acknowledge memorial gifts from August 1, 2023 to July 31, 2024 in memory of Albert Quie, Melvin & Lull Groff, Janice Mae Johnson, Paul & Billy Severson, Truman Carlson, Jennifer Koenig, Nancy Halling, Mary C Halverson, Catie Webb, Kristen Stortz, Keith D Johnson, Marilyn Zielke, Amanda Donkers, Elaine Hope, LouAnn Lervik, and to honor the Rosenqvist family, Paul & Mary Nesseth.



ON THE ROAD AGAIN IN 2024 AND 2025



The Valley Grove tapestries, woven by Robbie LaFleur, will be back on the road during their “off” season. In November and December 2024 they will be exhibited at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. March and April 2025 the tapestries will head south to the Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, Iowa as part of that Norwegian-American museum’s celebration of the bicentennial celebration of the first Norwegian settlers to land in the United States in 1825.

These traveling exhibits continue the intent to share the Valley Grove story with the wider community, as outlined in the grant we received from the Partners for Sacred Places to commission the tapestries.

The tapestries can also be found for sale in a packet of 8 notes cards (with envelopes) at the September Country Social for only \$10/packet.



More information on events and changes are on our updated website <https://valleygrovemn.org>. For a quick visual history of Valley Grove and the Preservation Society, watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ofi9uZzwg8>.

If you are willing to receive your newsletter through email, please send us your email address. Send to: info@valleygrovemn.org or by US mail at PO Box 75, Nerstrand, MN 55053



Many thanks!

We hope to see you at the September 15 Country Social, 1-4 PM.

You can always find news, photos, and updates on events at <https://valleygrovemn.org>.
