

OLD TRONDHJEM CHURCH

Historic  
Trondhjem:  
Telling a Story,  
Preserving a  
Treasure.

Spring 2018

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**Historic  
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## Syttende Mai Celebration

Sunday, May 20th, 2:00 pm

Please join us for our annual gathering featuring noted storyteller, Kris Meyer. Kris and her sister, Deb Bakke, will be sharing Norwegian folklore tales, family memories, songs and other fun stories!

**Coffee, Norwegian treats, and fellowship  
to follow the program.**



**KRIS MEYER, Ph.D.**  
**Motivational Storyteller**

***KRIS MEYER** is a storyteller, educator, and counselor. As a storyteller, she enjoys audiences of all ages. She offers her stories with inspiration, a quick wit, a warm spirit, and lots of energy. Her stories grow out of folklore, human experiences that teach an understanding of life, and things conjured up in a vivid imagination.*

# FROM THE PRESIDENT



NANCY NORTON

## A Message from President Nancy Halverson Norton:

We have just experienced an amazing period of growth and expansion with the completion of the renovation and addition to the social hall. We still need some additional tables and chairs, and will address any remaining landscape issues when weather permits. But we have spent down the designated funds and are pleased with the result. We are grateful for the contributions of time and money made by so many to make this a reality!

What is next? Consistent with TCPS's Mission, to preserve and restore the Historic Trondhjem Church building, we must turn our attention back to our beloved historic structure. Earlier this month we found it necessary to make an unanticipated and expensive repair to our well. We must also repair some siding and do some additional exterior painting this year on the historic Church. To that end, we must continue to rely upon your financial support for this key preservation work.

Lastly, how shall we make the best use of the historic structure and the expanded gathering space? Do you have ideas for programs and events that will make use of this wonderful space? If so, we want to hear about them! We are also working on updated rental guidelines. Please consider using this Church and Social Hall for important events for your family or

organization.

See you at Syttende Mai on May 20<sup>th</sup>!

Nancy Halverson Norton

[mnenorton@q.com](mailto:mnenorton@q.com)

612-965-3005

## Update on "Have a Seat"

Thank you so much for the designated funds we received from our Fall solicitation for tables and chairs for the expanded social hall. We now have funds to purchase 4 tables and 8 chairs, which we hope to do before our Syttende Mai event. It is our hope to be able to purchase an additional two tables, as well as 40 more chairs to increase available seating to 90+. If you are interested in contributing to this goal, please make a donation in any amount, and note that it is for seating. Thank you!



## TCPS BOARD

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**President** - Nancy Halverson Norton

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**Finance & Membership**— Ann Pocker

**Account/Auditor**—Randy Halverson

**Legal Advisor**—Nancy Halverson Norton

# MUSEUM

## MUSEUM COMMITTEE AT WORK

– submitted by **John Lindell**

Proposed budget May17-April18: \$18,450  
Expenses through Feb 2018: \$9374.82

The museum committee has resumed meeting after a holiday and short winter break. On the third Thursday of each month six to eight TCPS members - Barb Johnson Lentsch, Arlys Halverson, Sandy Johnson Valek, Jean Fossum, Mavis and Merle Fossum and I - gather to share and document stories, identify and catalogue historic photographs, and add all this into a growing “searchable data base”.

We would love to have anyone with family connections or memories of the Trondhjem community join us! A new member of the committee, Jean Torgerson, recently joined us and brought family photographs, which we will electronically scan. She has family relationships with Lavangers, and several other families with ties to old Trondhjem. She also has stories related to the images that we will document for our growing collection. While the originals will stay with the family, the scans and data will be part of the TCPS Museum collection.

This is a wonderful way for any family to collect, record and organize their history plus add it to the larger history of Trondhjem. While keeping originals one can leave with a recorded history and electronic copy of the scans. We are collecting photos and stories of old Trondhjem families, friends, activities, farm homesteads, or anything pertaining to life in the Trondhjem community.

Coffee, morning treats, and pizza for lunch, all are part of good company and some productive work. Meetings start at 9:30 a.m., usually the third Thursday of each month.

John Lindell, Museum Committee Chair  
612-559-8223. [jrlindell@outlook.com](mailto:jrlindell@outlook.com)

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Visit us at [www.TrondhjemPreservation.org](http://www.TrondhjemPreservation.org)  
and  
like “Old Trondhjem Church” on Facebook.

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# 140 YEARS AGO

## IN 1878 THE TRONDHJEM COMMUNITY DECIDED TO BUILD A CHURCH

- By Merle Fossum

In the 1860's and 70's the earliest Norwegian immigrants were forming a new community in Minnesota they called Trondhjem. Why did they leave their beloved families and the country they loved so dearly? The primary reason seems to be hunger. Early letters that they sent to their families back home spoke of how impressed they were by the abundance of food on the table here in America.

In those early years, they arrived at this hilly and heavily forested landscape in Rice County where there were only a few dirt trails for roads and only rudimentary government. They depended on their new neighbors for mutual support, friendship, cooperative farm work, and they gathered together every few weeks for church services, whenever a visiting pastor could come by to lead their worship. In the earliest days they assembled at one another's homes for these services. And records also mention that they gathered at Knoll's schoolhouse on occasion.

In 1876 they created the formal organization that they named Thronhjem's Norwegian Lutheran Church (yes, it was spelled with a "Th" in the constitution). Among their first tasks was to establish a cemetery and they decided to accept the gift of one acre of land donated by Johannes Fossum from his farm. The attraction of this spot, which today is the oldest section in Trondhjem Cemetery, was the fact that it was located on the boundary between Webster Township and Wheatland Township which they believed meant that some day a road would be built along that boundary.

By 1878, 140 years ago, the community was growing with more arrivals from Norway and they had enough resources to take on construction of the first Trondhjem Church across the township road from the cemetery. This is the spot where our present historic church now stands. Minutes dated May 30, 1878 show that eight farmers donated "gifts of timber" measuring 8 X 8 X 24 (no doubt harvested from the original forests on their farms) which were used for the floor joists under the church. We have no pictures of that original church.

About 21 years later, in 1899, the congregation had outgrown the space and there were some unspecified

problems with the original structure. So after some tense and emotional conflict over whether to repair the first church or build new, the members decided to build the structure that we have today. But we know that much of this present church contains parts of the first church. In those times, nothing that could be re-used was discarded. I recall my grandfather, John Fossum, saying that the chancel of this original church was saved and is the chancel of the historic church we care for today. Furthermore, in the process of restoring this church building in 1999, Dallas Berg and I inspected the supporting timbers in the crawl space under the floor and noticed that these heavy oak logs supporting the floor have notches and cut outs that indicate a prior use. No doubt, they were reused from the original church and they are the logs donated by members 140 years ago.



Fieldstones Support the Logs in Crawl Space  
Beneath the Floor

Also, the State Historic Architect, Charlie Nelson, visited our historic church a number of times to consult with us during our restoration and one time he inspected the swinging doors that separate the narthex from the sanctuary. He could see that those doors had a prior use and speculated that they "came out of somebody's barn". But now, in retrospect, it's likely that they too were deemed worth reusing from the first church building.

*article continues...*



Swinging Doors as They Appeared During Restoration

Today we are deeply grateful to those early immigrants who created this legacy. So we care for this physical gem that Charlie Nelson called “a state treasure”. It reminds us of the foundations they created and which we stand upon.



# DONATIONS: NOVEMBER 2017-APRIL 2018

## **Donations**

Linda Otto  
Bill & Lu Lindstrom  
Stephen Hanks  
Norman Vinnes  
Jerry Sandmann  
Deanna Friederich  
Rein & Lorraine Lemke  
Iva Dodson  
William Roadfeldt  
Gary Stinar  
Karen Holz  
Henry & Cheryl Albers  
Sheldon Berg

## **Tables/Chairs**

Darin & Dianne Pavek  
Dave & Donna Knudtson

## **Memory of Ralph Arneson**

Renee Fredrickson

## **Memory of Ruth Kielmeyer**

Roxie McElhone  
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## **Memory of Norman Halverson**

Margaret Velde

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Nancy Norton

## **Honor of Ella Halverson**

Margaret Velde  
Dave & Donna Knudtson  
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## **Memory of our Parents**

David & Judy Saxerud

## **Memory of Elna & Sherwin Hansen**

Dick & Roxanne Simon  
Dale & Betty Quist

## **Memory of Zackary Baldwin**

Nancy & Larry Baldwin

## **Memory of Char Rahn**

Nancy & Larry Baldwin

## **Memory of Eunice & Alvin Johnson**

Dick & Roxanne Simon  
Darrell Wiese  
Rev. Gene & Margaret Heglund

## **Memory of the Pioneers who led the way**

George & Judith Pinc

## **Memory of Barbara Buchite**

Allan Buchite

## **Memory of Joyce & Duane Pflaum & Lee & Carol Fossum**

Merle & Mavis Fossum

## **Memory of Bob Quinnell**

Michael & Mary Ann Johnson

## **Memory of Russell & Evelyn Anseth**

Sonje Moore

## **Memory of Percy & Millie Johnson**

Jean Johnson

## **Memory of Parents, Mens & Edna Berg**

Ardis Berg Wilson

## **Memory of Mens & Edna Berg**

Arleigh & Barbara Berg

## **Memory of Robert V. Tuma**

Leonard V. & Elizabeth Tuma

## **Memory of Daniel & Emelie, Mens & Edna & Arleigh & Deloris Berg**

Carol D. Berg

## **Memory of Gordy & Barb Halverson**

Ken & Cindy Halverson

## **Memory of Dwayne & Joyce Pflaum**

Stephan & Sandra Lee  
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## **Memory of Randa Vogen**

Alan Vogen, Eric & Tove, Bjorn & Jen Vogen & Chris Vogen

## **Memory of Joyce Pflaum**

Susan Bruley

## **Memory of Grandparents Peter & Alizzie Berg**

Elaine Hernke

## **Memory of Grandparents**

Sondra Berg Jensen

*Thank you for your  
contributions  
that help sustain this  
beautiful, historic treasure!*



**Trondhjem Community  
Preservation Society**

Old Trondhjem News  
Trondhjem Community Preservation Society  
PO Box 259, Lonsdale, MN 55046

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All Contributions are tax deductible.

Any \$15.00 contribution will make you a member for the upcoming year.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please Accept my Gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To be Given in Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

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We will gladly send an acknowledgment of your gift to someone you choose. Simply write the name and address below, of where you would like an acknowledgement sent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Return to Trondhjem Community Preservation Society (TCPS), PO Box 259, Lonsdale, MN 55046. TCPS is a 501 C3 corporation and all contributions are tax deductible.