



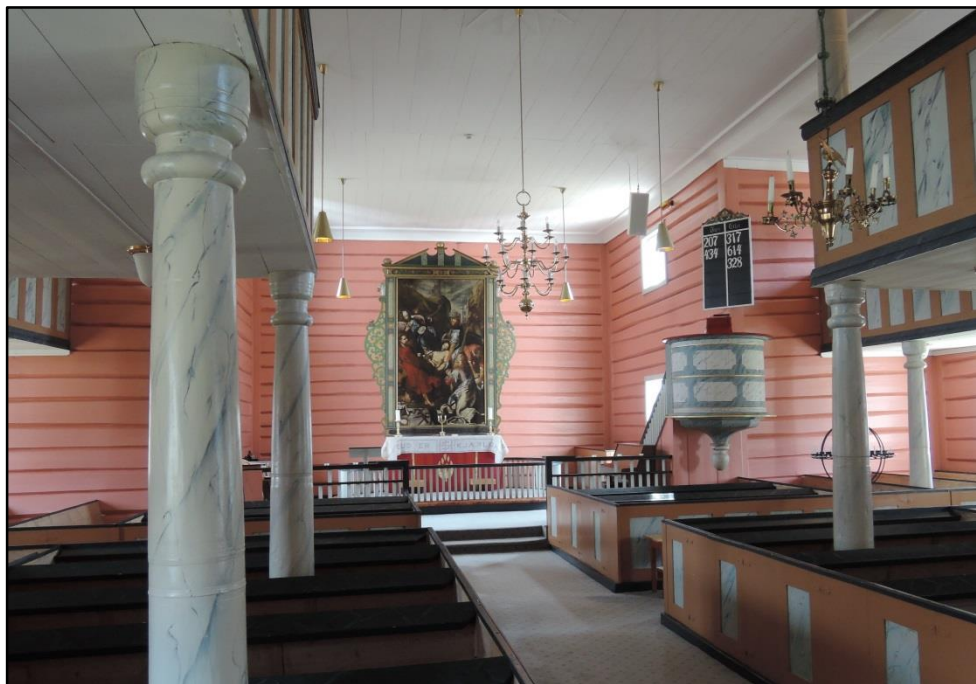
Valle church



DEN NORSKE KYRKJA
Valle og Hylestad sokn

The church is located in the middle of the rural district of Valle, on a hill named Vaddarhaugen. It was consecrated in 1844. The old church, which was built during the 1660s, was then demolished. We do not know when the first church in Valle parish was built, but according to the pope's account book of 1327 there were two churches in this parish, one on each side of the river Otra. The church on the east side has always been located on Vaddarhaugen. The church on the west side, however, was probably abolished in connection with the Reformation in 1537. Remains of the old churchyard are still visible on the southern side of the builders merchant.

It was Anders Torsson Syrtveit who was the master builder of the church in Valle. He had built six churches before, including the churches in Hylestad and Bygland. At that time there was little forest in the parish of Valle. Most of the timber logs were therefore cut in the Rygnestad hills, 15-20 kilometres away. Boards and planks had to be transported equally far, from Finndalen, east of Valle, because there was a gate sawmill located there.



The church is cruciform. On each long side there are two large galleries. The young people used to sit on the galleries; the young men on the right-hand side and the young women on the left-hand side. The same applied to the pews; the married men sat on the right-hand side and the married women on the left-hand side. On the top

of the church tower there is a weathercock, and below that a heart which is visible from all four sides. There is also a clock painted on the church tower.

The baptismal font is shaped as an hour glass and it is octagonal. This symbolizes the eight people who were saved in Noah's Ark. The figure of eight can be written infinitely many times without lifting the pen, and therefore this number has been seen as the symbol of rebirth and eternal life. The baptismal dish is made of tin and might be the oldest part of equipment in the church.

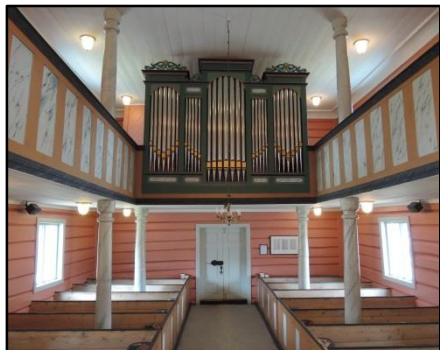
The altar piece was donated to the congregation in 1670 by Laurits Anderson, a lawspeaker (~ judge), and his wife. The painting is a Dutch replica from the mid-1600s, based on an engraving by Egidius Sadeler, depicting Federico Barocci's painting "The Burial of Christ" (from 1579-1582). The original painting is located in the church Chiesa della Croce in the Italian town of Senigallia.

The altar piece portrays John the Apostle, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who have come to the grave which is cut into the mountain on the right-hand side of the painting. Mary Magdalene is kneeling and worshipping, whereas Mary and the women around her have withdrawn in sorrow and despair. In the background we can see Calvary, a castle and Jerusalem.



The church in Valle is a simple building with little decoration; therefore the altar piece defines the character of the room. The motif is quite unusual for an altar piece, and it adds a special atmosphere to the room. Another replica of the same painting can be found in the stave church in Røldal. The original painting by Federico Barocci is Italian Renaissance, whereas the replica in Valle is Dutch Baroque. This implies that the original painting is harmonious and beautiful, whereas the replica has a more dramatic and realistic expression. This may also be an expression of the difference between southern European Catholicism and northern European Protestantism.

As already mentioned, the church was consecrated in 1844, on December 1. One of the many people who were present in the church this day was Ivar Aasen, the famous Norwegian dialect researcher who founded an alternative form of written Norwegian, originally called “landsmål”, now: “nynorsk”. At that time he was in Setesdal on one of his many research journeys. The “nynorsk” liturgy was introduced in Valle in 1919, and the “nynorsk” hymnal in 1926.



In 1934 the church got its first organ, built by August Nilsen in 1885. In the mid-1970s it was replaced by a new organ. The present organ was built by the Dutch organ builder Steendam in 1997. It is built in late Classic, Dutch style, and it has 18 stops + 4 transmissions, divided over Great, Swell and Pedal. Concerts are given here on a regular basis.

On the churchyard there are monuments commemorating Olav Knutsson Tveiten (1758-1837), who was a delegate to the Constitutional Assembly at Eidsvoll in 1814, Torgeir Bjørnaraa (1864-1951), who was both a teacher and an author, and Knut Bø (1896-1944), who was executed by the Germans in 1944.



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