

The Church of Norderhov

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH BUILDING:

The church has from ancient times been the main sanctuary at Ringerike. Originally its name was Njardarhov. The ending “-hov” tells us that there must have been a sacrificial place for Njord, the god of fertility, here in pagan times.

Ringerike was christianized under Olav Tryggvason and Olav Haraldsson. The first church in the region of Ringerike was built of wood about the year 1000. In the following century a stone church was built. It had a large western tower, a nave and chancel in the middle and with an apse that completed the choir.



The main entrance was through the foot of the tower. Today there is just the nave and the tower left of that old church.

The church was mentioned for the very first time during legal proceedings in 1298.

Anna Colbjørnsdatter (= daughter) is the most famous person connected with the church. She is famed for her quick presence of mind and her behavior in 1716 when Swedish soldiers had occupied the rectory. It was due to her doing that the Swedes were taken by surprise and defeated.



Annas husband was Jonas Ramus, the rector, was well known as a writer of religious and historical works. Both Anna and her husband are buried in the cellar under the church.

Their second son, Daniel Ramus, succeeded his father as a vicar. He became owner of the church in 1722 because king Fredrik IV, who was in need for money, sold it by public auction together with the other churches in the clerical district.

Daniel Ramus died unmarried in 1727, and his mother inherited the church. She survived all her children. When Anna died in 1736, her granddaughter, Anne Larsdatter, and her husband Christian Petersen, became the new owners. In 1739 they sold the church to the parish.



The church went through minor alterations during the centuries. But in 1881 a complete rebuilding took place under, the guidance of the architect Darre Eckhoff. The choir was torn down and moved further east, but was formed as the old one with semi-round shape. The ceiling was lowered, and new, bigger windows were installed.

From 1953 to 1956 the church was restored back to an earlier form, but not the original. The small

window at the foot of the tower and the openings for the sound of the bells are, however, original. A stone, marked with a cross, from the old choir was found in the church yard-wall and built in from the outside in the present apse.

INVENTORY:

The pulpit from 1582 is the oldest piece of inventory. In 1881 it was taken to pieces and removed. The parts were taken to different places, and some were lost. During the restoration (1953 - 56) most of the main pieces were recollected and the missing ones replaced, so now the pulpit is in use again.

There are several inscriptions in Latin to be seen on the edge of the top of the pulpit.

The alterpiece was most likely made about 1680 by the woodcarver Johannes Larsen Skråstad. The center parts show Jesus in Getsemane at the bottom, further on is the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, and the Ascension at the top. At the sides there are several historical persons; Moses and Aron are the largest. The others are the eleven apostles and St. Laurentius. At the top stands Christ as Salvatore Mundi (= Savior of the World) between the four evangelists.

The font is from about 1800.

The paintings: The Whit sun Wonder was given to the church in 1735.

Ecce Homo (Jesus with the crown of thorns) was painted by Eilif Petersen and given to the church about 100 years ago.

The two paintings are of Anna Colbjørnsdatter and her husband, Jonas Ramus.

The iron fitted chest was originally meant for the daughter of Anna Colbjørnsdatter, Anna Sophie, as a chest for personal belongings.

The chalice is from 1821. The older one was stolen in 1817.

There are three bells. The oldest one from the Middle Ages cracked in 2005. A new one replaced it in 2006. The original bell was hung up for the public outside the building of Ringerikes Museum in 2007. (The very same building where the mentioned battle with the Swedes took place in 1716.)

The second bell has been recast once, whilst the smallest has been recasted twice.

The child tombstone from the Early Middle Ages is formed like a little house and is unique in Norway.



ADDITION:

Some medieval objects from the Church are kept in “Universitetes Oldsaksamling” in Oslo.

These are a big crucifix of wood, a censer and a door-ring formed like two interwoven dragons.