

Lefse and Lemonade

Historic Grue Church to hold fourth annual summer event



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

Bobbi Hepper-Olson, a Buxton architect, is shown in this Grand Forks Herald file photo from 2021.

BY DELANEY OTTO - GRAND FORKS HERALD

BUXTON, N.D.

The fourth annual Lefse and Lemonade event — to be held Sunday, June 23, at Grue Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church — will be a little different from the previous three, Bobbi Hepper-Olson said.

This year there will be outdoor music by Allie Crummy and the Hot Tub Brass, a quilt display, bake sale and silent auction. The event will run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 423 168th Ave NE, rural Buxton. People are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs as well as umbrellas, though Hepper-Olson said she hopes for good weather.

“We’re just excited to have people out there and see what’s going on,” she said. “We’re hoping for a nice day and people can come out and have lunch and listen to some music and just socialize and have fun.”

The celebration began because Hepper-Olson and other members of the Historic Grue Church, who take care of the building, wanted to have an annual event. Since the church is Norwegian, they thought making lefse was a good idea. Hepper-Olson, her mom, sister, sister’s friend and son, made some lefse beforehand. While the weather hasn’t always been the best for lefse-making, there will be lefse on the grill during this year’s event.

Hepper-Olson and the Historic Grue Church, a subsidiary of the nonprofit Buxton in Bloom, [purchased the church](#) in 2020 following its closure. Volunteers have been working on it since then, raising money through fundraising and grants, such as ones from the North Dakota Council on the Arts and the [American Scandinavian Foundation](#). Hepper-Olson is working on grants for electrical and foundation work, and NDSU students are rebuilding a main east-side window, she said. There also isn’t any functioning plumbing in the building, and the outside is in the midst of being painted. Interior paint will be done after that, and there are plans for a historic site for Mancur Olson, a famous economist who is buried in the nearby Grue Cemetery. Hepper-Olson said she’d also like to have an artist in residence at the church.

“It’s been fun. We’re slowly getting there,” she said. “We have some challenges that we need to overcome out there.”

When everything is done, Hepper-Olson wants the building to be used as a cultural center and a venue for weddings, family gatherings, baptisms and community events. Past churchgoers are interested in the project and come to the Lefse and Lemonade event from other states like Iowa, California and Nebraska. Next year is the 200th anniversary of Norwegians immigrating to America, and Hepper-Olson said the group will plan something big to celebrate. An ambassador from Norway was in Fargo a few weeks ago, she said, and met the group.

“They’re trying to keep track of how many events are going to be celebrating that 200th anniversary,” Hepper-Olson said. “I think there’s going to be a

lot of events, so we want to get on their radar right away. We're going to start planning early."

More information about Lefse and Lemonade and the Historic Grue Church is available at <https://www.historicgruechurch.org/>.