

Monte Vista Methodist Church unique in state

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Historic church available for community use



MONTE VISTA — The Monte Vista United Methodist Church received a \$161,765 grant from the State Historical Fund (SHF) on Aug. 1, 2010.

The amount awarded by the SHF was \$121,324 with Matching Funds of \$40,441 — \$15,441 from church member pledges and \$25,000 donated by Ray and Colette Skeff.

This is a program of the Colorado Historical Society, to help preserve and restore the historic value of the building. The church is on both the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties and the National Historic Register of Historic Places.

Monte Vista United Methodist Church is proud of its distinction as the first church organized in the new town of Henry – later named Monte Vista.

The Henry Town and Land Company were formed on May 9, 1884 and the town's name was changed in 1885.

The Union Sunday School was organized on May 30, 1884, and met in the Henry Mercantile Company on Jefferson Street.

On July 4, 1884, the first Methodist sermon was preached in a large booth erected on the site of the present church.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Henry was incorporated July 14, 1884.

Construction of the first stone chapel that housed the now “Monte Vista” Methodist Church began February 10, 1886. It was later used as a Sunday school building. The larger stone church with a bell and tower was completed in 1892, dedicated on December 11, 1892.

The stone church burned on Sunday, April 2, 1922, during the Sunday school hours due to a defective stove.

The current church building was dedicated on March 16, 1924.

Now 88 years old, the building represents an architectural classification of the “Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Prairie-School Style,” a distinctive method of construction and type.

It includes medieval features such as buttresses and a battlement parapet on the front elevation, along with cornices, façade developed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

The shape, massive size, and construction materials are distinctive in relation to other buildings in the community.

No other building was constructed with “purple tapestry iron spot” brick.

The massive stone blocks are locally quarried volcanic rhyolite west of Monte Vista. The interior of the building reflects the influence of the popular Akron Plan, developed in Akron, Ohio and first used in 1867.

There are 54 original and unmarred stained glass windows.

The impressive Estey two-manual pipe organ console has fifty-seven pipes that form the upper backdrop of the chancel.

The church has been associated with Monte Vista’s social history in both community and church related activities.

It has been used for musicals, plays, and other state productions. The pipe organ has led to numerous organ concerts by local and professional musicians. It is widely used for weddings and funerals.

It has adequate space for banquets and luncheons and is utilized by many organizations and youth groups including school related activities, weekly meetings for Boy and Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and traveling youth over-nights, Beaver Creek Youth Camp meetings,

youth functions, Quilters Guild, rummage sales, Campfire meetings, Hunter Safety Courses, Fire Department drills, San Juan Youth Group Training, Yoga classes, day care center, local Red Cross and Water Administration meetings and a Homeland Security Seminar, and P.E.O. Meetings.

The exterior restoration consisted of cleaning and re-pointing the masonry caused by water damage and paint the windows on the South and West Elevations.

The interior work consisted of constructing stairwells and exits for easier access and installing fireproof doors to comply with safety and fire codes.

Rhonda Maas of Building Restoration Specialties, Inc. completed the masonry work, while Van's Decorating, Van Kimberling completed the window painting.

Bob Van Iwaarden and Van Iwaarden Builders, Inc. completed the interior work.

Colette Skeff was very instrumental in providing all the information necessary for writing the grant application.

The Board of Trustees has worked hard to make sure all the requirements are completed. Belinda Zink, Zink and Associates, Inc. from Fort Collins, Colo., developed all the plans submitted to the Colorado Historical Society and provided services throughout the grant process.

The public will benefit by this project since preservation and rehabilitation will maintain the building's historic features while improving the building for its continued community use.

Its location is one block from the National Register Monte Vista Downtown Historic District and Urban Renewal Authority revitalized historic business block.

This is the third grant awarded to the church by the SHF.

Members say it was exciting and rewarding to receive this grant to preserve the church building for use by the public both now and for future generations.

The church has always been used as a source to the community to gather for various groups.

The church encourages the community to use the building by contacting the church office at 852-2853.