

# COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES NOMINATION FORM

**SECTION I**

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**Name of Property**

Historic Name First Methodist Episcopal Church

Other Names Monte Vista United Methodist Church

**Address of Property**

[ ] address not for publication

Street Address 215 Washington Street

City Monte Vista County Rio Grande Zip 81144

**Present Owner of Property**

(for multiple ownership, list the names and addresses of each owner on one or more continuation sheets)

Name Monte Vista United Methodist Church

Address 215-219 Washington Street Phone 719-852-2853

City Monte Vista State Colorado Zip 81144

**Owner Consent for Nomination**

(attach signed consent from each owner of property - see attached form)

**Preparer of Nomination**

Name Peggy Barr (additional material by OAHP staff) Date February 2003

Organization Monte Vista United Methodist Church, The Monte Vista Historical Society

Address 105 W. Prospect Avenue Phone 719-852-2518

City Monte Vista State Colorado Zip 81144

**FOR OFFICIAL USE:**

Site Number 5RN782

\_\_\_\_\_ Nomination Received

Senate # 5 House # 60

5/16/2003 Review Board Recommendation  
 Approval  Denial

6/11/2003 CHS Board State Register Listing  
 Approved  Denied

**Certification of Listing:** President, Colorado Historical Society

Date

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name First Methodist Episcopal Church

**SECTION II**

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**Local Historic Designation**

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

yes ---  individually designated  designated as part of a historic district

Date designated \_\_\_\_\_

Designated by \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of municipality or county)

**Use of Property**

Historic Religion/religious facility; Social

Current Religion/Religious facility; Social

**Original Owner** The First Methodist Episcopal Church

Source of Information warranty deeds (The Rio Grande Abstract Company, book 155, page 66; 6 September 1923)

**Year of Construction** 1922

Source of Information newspaper articles (Monte Vista Journal and Monte Vista Graphic Reporter 28 May 1922) and 1922 Construction Plan Records

**Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer** Charles J. Anderson

1922 Construction Plan Records

Source of Information \_\_\_\_\_

**Locational Status**

Original location of structure(s)

Structure(s) moved to current location

Date of move \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION III**

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**Description and Alterations**

(describe the current and original appearance of the property and any alterations on one or more continuation sheets)

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

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**SECTION IV**

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**Significance of Property**

**Nomination Criteria**

- A** - property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history
- B** - property is connected with persons significant in history
- C** - property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan
- D** - property is of geographic importance
- E** - property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history

**Areas of Significance**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture            | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                     | Architecture                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology – prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Law                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology – historic             | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/ Recreation     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage               | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/ Settlement       | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography/ Community Identity | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/ Government      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning and Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine               | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social History |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |

**Significance Statement**

(explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

**SECTION V**

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**Locational Information**

Lot(s) 17-22 Block 3 Addition Original Townsite

USGS Topographic Quad Map Monte Vista

**Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property**

(describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name First Methodist Episcopal Church

**SECTION VI**

**Photograph Log for Black and White Photographs**

(prepare a photograph log on one or more continuation sheets)

**SECTION VII**

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION**

**Owner Consent Form**

**Black and White Photographs**

**Color Slides**

**Sketch Map(s)**

**Photocopy of USGS Map Section**

**Optional Materials**

**For Office Use Only**

Property Type:  building(s)  district  site  structure  object  area

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: Late 19<sup>th</sup> & Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements/Prairie

Period of Significance: 1922 - 1938

Level of Significance:  Local  State  National

Acreage less than one

P.M. N.M. Township 39 N Range 8 E Section 31 Quarter Sections SW SW NW SW

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 398660 Northing 4159500

Site Elevation: 7660 feet

Property Name First Methodist Episcopal Church

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## DESCRIPTION and ALTERATIONS

The First Methodist Episcopal Church is located on the southwest corner of Washington Street and Second Avenue, one block from downtown Monte Vista. Construction began in 1922 on the church which is within a predominately residential area that includes several other older churches (the 1888 St. Stephen Episcopal Church, the 1898 First Presbyterian Church, and the 1909 First Christian Church) along with the 1932 [National Register-listed] Post Office. The building sits on the same site as the original 1886 First Methodist Episcopal Church which was destroyed by a fire in 1922. The church occupies four city lots landscaped with trees, grass, bushes, flowers, a rock garden, and two church signs. An alley on the west includes a small adjacent parking area. The associated 1904 parsonage straddles the two lots south of the church. The building retains its original appearance with the exception of an ADA ramp at the façade corner and an addition that covers the basement entry on the north side. The building is in good condition and exhibits a high degree of integrity in its location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship.

The two-story church measures 78' by 86'6" and has a raised basement of stone, dark brick walls with light colored stone and concrete trim, and a flat roof with a gentle pitch that is hidden behind a steeped parapet with a quarry-faced stone coping. The basement walls consist of six courses of quarry-faced native rhyolite ashlar with a water table course and beaded mortar. The walls are purple tapestry brick laid in a running bond. The slightly pitched roof is sheathed in a modified rubberized rolled roofing with a sand ballast. The east face of the building has a crenellated parapet, and each of the corners projects out slightly with a secondary wooden cornice spanning the wall above the upper story windows. Charles J. Anderson of Alamosa created the unusual design of the church, which looks more like a school or other public building. While the form and detailing belie its religious function, the building's massing attests to its Akron Plan interior.

The majority of the windows are wood frame, 1/1 double hung sash with tooled (striated) concrete sills. Fifty-four contain original stained glass, nineteen of these are on the east facade. All non-stained glass windows contain a light frosted glazing. There are three large window openings on the south and north sides that are comprised of a large multi-light window above four double hung windows. The three large stained glass windows on the south side and one on the north side have a religious motif. The east and north sides of the building have a regular, evenly spaced, linear fenestration pattern; the west and south sides have a more random window distribution. The doors throughout the church are single leaf, paneled solid wood, with the exception of the short French doors into the nursery room on the south side and the double doors on the north side addition.

The church faces east onto Washington Street where three series of concrete steps and landings with stone side walls lead to the slightly projecting central entrance bay. The three-portal recessed entry is framed and divided by four buttressed brick pilasters that create a frontispiece culminating in a crenellated parapet. Each pilaster rests on a raised plinth of smooth faced concrete block and has four decorative stepped back buttresses. Each buttress has a slanted concrete cap with a pecked finish and a striated edge. Alternating between the buttressed pilasters on the second level are three windows. Quarry faced stone forms a flat arch with voussoirs above the three portals that lead to the recessed entry porch and five single leaf paneled wooden doors. Narrow windows flank the projecting frontispiece and the façade is broken again by the projecting bays at each corner. Two windows on each of the two floors

Property Name First Methodist Episcopal Church

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punctuate the projecting corner bays. A granite cornerstone was placed at the northeast corner of the building, and an S-shaped ramp built of uncoursed rubble and concrete blocks with a wrought iron railing occupies the opposite corner. A door replaced a lower level narrow stained glass window in order to provide access into the church from the ramp. In the curved space beneath the ramp is a terraced rock garden.

The north side of the building faces Second Avenue. The projecting corners create a recessed central portion where four stepped pilasters evenly divide the space filled with three large stained glass windows. Like those on the east façade, the pilasters rest on a raised plinth of concrete block and the decorative buttressing have concrete caps. A small flat-roofed, stuccoed, concrete block (CMU) addition covers the basement entrance and extends out to the sidewalk; its double leaf wood paneled doors face east. There are two windows on each level of the east projecting corner bay and three windows on each level of the west corner bay. Windows also punctuate the stone walls of the raised basement. The series of four basement windows that flank the covered entry share the same treatment as the three portals on the east face—quarry-faced stone forming a flat arch with voussoirs.

The west side (rear) of the building faces an alley. Its central recessed section formed by the projecting corners is not as deep as the other elevations. Tall, narrow windows punctuate the walls. A decorative motif that is not so much applied to the façade, but integrated into it appears on the upper wall. The series of ten brick pendants united by a horizontal band of stone is reminiscent of a Frank Lloyd Wright design. A wood-framed partially enclosed carport with a breezeway abuts the building's southwest corner. There is also a coal chute opening on this elevation.

The south side faces the parsonage. Like the north elevation, three large stained glass windows occupy the central recessed section. Toward the front of the building there are small French doors at the basement level that access the nursery. A small gabled roof metal shed sits next the building toward the back (alley).

Front elevation of church prior to the installation of the ramp and the replacement of a window opening (shaded) with a doorway.

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*Interior*

At the front entrance of the building, a south door from the recessed entry leads to a vestibule and rest room, located by the sanctuary door. On the north side is a library/meeting room called the Dorcas Chapel and a storage room. The 41' x 63' Akron Plan sanctuary has a 30-foot ceiling above the nave/chancel area and the adjacent assembly room. The sanctuary's sloping wood floor is carpeted. There are three aisles through the two curved sections of oak pews that lead to the offset curved platform of the chancel and the communion rail.

Original paneling of wainscot oak is used as a chancel rail, a choir screen, and forms a backdrop for the chancel. Above the wainscot behind the chancel platform are fifty-seven faux organ pipes. The working organ pipes, for the original Estey two-manual pipe organ, are in a separate room behind the chancel area. The oak console pipe organ is located in front of the choir area. Behind the choir area, a door leads to two offices, a hallway, and stairways that lead to the basement and to the second story. In the second story, there is a room for youth functions, a hallway and a loft above the assembly room stage.

Between the sanctuary and adjacent 30' x 50' assembly room, there are three large openings with overhead doors, each weighing one-ton. A wrought iron railing spans each framed section opening. The carpeted floor of the assembly room is flat, the same level as the back of the sanctuary. The room consists of a large open area, a deep stage, a kitchenette and two stairways. Combined, the two rooms have a 500-person seating capacity. Overlooking the sanctuary and assembly room on the east is an extended balcony. The balcony areas have been remodeled as Sunday school rooms by making permanent dividers for four rooms.

The raised basement includes a large dining hall/activities room, a large kitchen area with three sinks, two large nursery rooms, a wheelchair accessible restroom, four storage areas, and a furnace room. The cement floors in the dining hall and nursery rooms are covered with carpet. All walls are plastered and painted. A steam boiler furnace that heats the entire building through radiators replaced the original hand-fired stoker, converted to gas. At the east end of the basement, a stairway leads up to the main floor sanctuary vestibule. At the west end, there is a stairwell with stairways that ascend to the main floor and to the second story. There are two rest rooms on the landing at alley level, one on either side of the stairway.

There are many interior decorative features. The sanctuary/assembly room areas, including the balcony, have terra cotta trim cornices. Placed in the center of each wall is raised decorative molding beneath the cornices. On each side of this molding in the sanctuary is a projecting scroll corbel. The large stained glass windows are inset with a plaster-relieving arch. All doors and windows on the main floor of the building have dark wood frames. This includes the large framed openings for the overhead doors. Above the overhead doors are eight small wood corbels, four in the sanctuary and four in the assembly room. The many radiators are capped, with one being ornate. The curved balcony wall above the sanctuary has a wood rail, whereas the assembly room balcony rail is solid wood, with a solid wood staircase leading to the main floor. The assembly room stage has a wood wainscot and a proscenium arch with decorative terra cotta trim. Framed accordion doors have replaced the curtains on the stage.

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A summary of the major exterior changes:

- 1969 Unattached S-shaped ramp built on the left front façade; entry door replaces one small stained glass window
- 1973 Storm windows placed over the six stained glass windows
- 1977 North entrance to the basement built as a “living memorial”
- 1981 Storm windows placed over all small windows
- 1992 Rubernoid brand rolled roofing laid
- 1993 Carport and breezeway installed at SW corner (initially a recycling shed)
- 2000 Stone walls flanking front stairs refaced and repaired by John Hoffman, master stonemason.
- 2002 New sidewalk and curb cuts in front; new sidewalks on the north.

A summary of the major interior changes:

- 1947 Kitchen enlarged and improved.
- 1949, 1973, 1974 Carpet laid throughout main floor and basement
- 1955 Ladies’ parlor in basement converted to nurseries
- 1974 Kitchenette in Assembly Room installed.
- 1982 Sunday school room partitions added to balcony area.
- 1988 Wheelchair accessible restroom built by vestibule, stairway repositioned.
- 1996 Burnham boiler (furnace) installed.
- 2000 Restroom in basement remodeled for wheelchair access

### *Parsonage*

Construction began in 1901 on the parsonage, which sits on the two lots south of the church and also faces east onto Washington Street. The building was completed in 1904. This 1-1/2 story Queen Anne house has a quarry faced stone foundation, painted brick walls, and a complex roofline of steeply pitched gables covered with asphalt shingles. Two red brick chimneys pierce the roof slopes and a variety of decorative shingles (scallop, square and octagonal) cover the numerous gable ends. An oriel window breaks through the cornice line in the gable end on the north side. Below it is a triple window illuminating the dining room. On the south side, a square projecting bay with a hipped roof breaks the cornice line. The façade has a central porch with Tuscan columns supporting the shed-with-gable roof. A recently installed elaborate balustrade connects the columns. Beside the door under the porch is a large fixed sash window with a colored light transom. With the exception of those in the living room and dining room, the windows are tall narrow, wood frame, double-hung 1/1 sash. The majority have quarry faced stone lintels and concrete sills; several of the main floor windows have brick radiating voussoirs. Decorative shutters adorn many of the first floor windows. Two double hung 1/1 windows fill the openings at the southeast corner that once contained two Queen Anne windows (an upper sash with a rectangular pane surrounded by smaller squares of colored glass). The nine-room house has hardwood floors on the main level with carpet covering the floor of the upper story. All walls are plastered; some walls are painted while others have wallpaper. Steam-heated radiators provide heat. The fenced back yard includes garden space and a metal shed.



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A summary of the major changes to the parsonage:

- 1921 two Queen Anne windows replaced
- 1940s Steam heating plant replaced the original baseburner coal stoves.
- 1946 Brick walls first painted
- 1978 Storage room built on the back.
- 1980 Addition built at the back includes a family room and laundry room.
- 1999 Porch balustrade and decorative shutters installed
- 2001 Interior painting and repair work throughout the building.

[site plan]

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Main Floor Plan

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Upper Floor Plan

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Lower Floor Plan

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## SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The First Methodist Episcopal Church is eligible to the State Register under Criterion C for its architectural significance as it represents a distinctive type and method of construction. The walls of the 1922 church are an unusual material—purple tapestry brick. No other building in Monte Vista is constructed using this type of brick. The building also reflects the important elements of the Akron Plan, a Protestant church design utilized during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The church is also eligible under criterion A for its association with the social history of Monte Vista. The building has been host to a wide variety of community activities over the years.

### *Architecture*

The brick used in the walls of the church is known as purple tapestry brick. Although it is larger in size than today's bricks, it was a common size for that time period. It was apparently made from firebrick clay and had a light salt glaze applied to it. Tom Welte of Summit Brick in Pueblo explained that bricks manufactured in the 1920s were made by the press method:

Looking at the brick, I would say that the clay used was a fire clay found in this area, but a lot by Beulah, just west of Pueblo. Clay was put in a mold and a big machine would press the clay together. The brick would then be dried and "fired" in a kiln. I would guess that the brick was fired at a high temperature and flashed. Flashing is where they put excess fuel into the kiln or reduce the amount of oxygen so that the flame/fire does not burn clean and it darkens the brick where it is exposed to the kiln atmosphere. It appears to have a salt glaze on the face. They used to shovel salt into the kiln. It would liquefy and adhere to the face of the brick. Depending on the amount, temperature, clay, etc. a salt glaze could come out a beautiful purple tapestry color such as your brick. Using a salt glaze was very smoky and to my knowledge no one has used a salt glaze since about the 1940s.

The Church Building Committee apparently chose this unusual color and finish of brick manufactured by the Pueblo Brick & Tile Company for their new building. No other building constructed with purple tapestry brick has been found in the town of Monte Vista or the San Luis Valley.

Another material used in the construction of the church, was a locally quarried lava stone or rhyolite. The raised foundation walls are made of this porous stone that results when volcanic foam hardens. The stone was quarried on Dry Creek and the Hathaway Quarry, south and west of Monte Vista respectively. Stone and brick structures replaced the original wood frame buildings in town, and rhyolite was used in a large percentage of the circa 1900 commercial buildings that are still standing in Monte Vista.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church reflects important elements of the Akron Plan. Believed to have originated in Akron, Ohio shortly after the Civil War, the Akron Plan was utilized by some Protestant denominations into the early 1920s. The plan reflected a religious philosophy that often stressed the importance of Sunday school attendance over church attendance. Based on a desire for separateness with togetherness, the large, open, high-ceiling interiors typically incorporated perimeter balconies that allowed all students to be together for opening and closing exercises. Folding partitions provided the

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flexibility to create separate classrooms for small group study. The design also had the congregation seated in a semi-circular fashion in order to be closer to the pulpit and preacher. From the exterior, the building possessed a massing that was very different from the more rectangular Basilica plan churches that typically included a center aisle to accommodate the processions of more formal religious services. More than 2,500 churches were built across the country using the basic plan. Many of the interiors were modified over time, particularly with the installation of more permanent partitions in the balcony area. Such was the case with this Monte Vista church. Characteristics of the Akron Plan seen in the First Methodist Episcopal Church include the sloping floor, the placement of the curved pews in the large open nave, the Assembly Room adjacent the Sanctuary, and the balcony area divided for Sunday school rooms.

Numerous architects throughout the country adapted the basic plan, and their designs were executed in popular ecclesiastical architectural styles of the time. For example, two other Akron Plan churches, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Montrose (listed in the National Register) and the First United Presbyterian Church in Loveland (listed in the State Register), were designed in a Romanesque Revival style with crenellated square towers. In a deviation from this pattern, the architectural style of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Monte Vista almost defies classification. Some see the building as an expression of Art Deco with a vertical emphasis and the illusion of a stepped or set-back façade created by the buttressing effect on the pilasters. However, Art Deco was not publicly realized in this country until the French exposition in 1926, making this 1922 construction a little too early for the style. In addition, the building lacks the ornamentation characteristic of Art Deco. Others see the building as an example of the Prairie Style and reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois (Wheaton 2003). It is interesting to note that both Art Deco and the Prairie Style consciously rejected the popular academic revival styles of the time.

The Prairie Style, a distinctly American style that originated with the Prairie School, was especially popular in the Midwest from about 1900 to 1930. The style is found primarily in domestic architecture, and only rarely used on commercial buildings. In its commercial expression, the style resembles a simplified version of the Sullivanesque with ornamentation (vegetal forms paired with geometric elements) adorning the upper floors, columnar design elements minimized by framing, and an organization of the windows that is both horizontal and vertical. The First Methodist Episcopal Church exhibits these characteristics, including a modest use of ornamentation. The ornamentation is employed in the same position as in Sullivanesque buildings; it is confined primarily to the top of the walls. The decorative element, a series of pendants, high on the west wall of the church is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's early designs. This ornamentation is not applied to the façade but rather completely integrated into it. In the First Methodist Episcopal Church, ornamentation plays a less central role than the building's massing. This reductive approach will later become an important tenet of modern architecture. The *Monte Vista Journal* when announcing the formal dedication even noted that the building is "constructed of cut brick and following a plan of modern architecture."

It is difficult to surmise what influences held sway over the architect of the church as very little is known about him. Charles J. Anderson designed the building. The 1922 *Colorado State Business Directory* lists him as a general contractor and designer in Alamosa. The 1920 Colorado census records for Alamosa include a C. J. Anderson, age 51, and family of six with an occupation of "Carpenter, Contractor." His home was on lot 15, block 14 in Alamosa. He was born in Illinois and was of Swedish

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decent. A May 22, 1922 *Alamosa Journal* newspaper article announced his new bungalow at the corner of Ross and Second Streets in Alamosa along with other new homes that he designed. Research has found little more about him, and no reference to any other large buildings that he designed.

### *Social History*

The Methodist Episcopal Church has been used for a variety of community activities through the years. The church was chosen due to its central location in town, its design of an assembly room with stage and large seating area, and its basement large enough for nearly any activity. Some examples of the types of events held in the church include musicals, plays, stage productions, dinner theatre, over-night stays by city groups going skiing or other activities such as geology trips, youth roller skating parties, banquets, day meetings for community organizations, weekly Scout meetings, Campfire girls meetings, Hunter Safety Courses, local Fire Department drills, Bonfils blood draw site, San Juan Youth Works orientation site for their mountain work program, quilting groups, rummage sales, day care center, community recycling center for five years, the ecumenical Community Contemporary Worship Services, and (more recently) the 9 Health Fair. The large building allows both church groups and community activities to occur at the same time.

The 1921 Monte Vista Armory is located two blocks north. Now vacant, this building was also used for local activities of a different sort; such as boxing matches, dances, and school graduation exercises. In 1938, the Central School Auditorium, a National Register-listed property, was built one block west of the church. It also held a variety of functions in its large facility; such as sporting events and band concerts.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Monte Vista began as a railroad siding called Lariat, established in 1881 by the Denver & Rio Grande Railway. The first mention of Lariat in the *Colorado Business Directory* appears in 1884 [based on information gathered the previous year] with an entry describing it as a post office in Rio Grande County 16 miles west of Alamosa; the only business listed is L. L. [Lillian] Fassett, postmaster and general merchant. A land promoter, Theodore C. (T. C.) Henry, arrived on the scene looking for a likely spot for a new canal venture. T. C. brought potential investors from the east on train excursions. In May 1884, the certificate of incorporation for the Henry Town & Land Company was filed. The new town was named Henry, honoring the promoter. Directors of the Company were: T. C. Henry, Henry J. Aldrich and Chauncey S. Aldrich. The manager of the Henry Town & Land Company, Chauncey S. Aldrich, campaigned to make the area conducive to raising a family. He promoted everything from the abolition of saloons (with a no-liquor clause in each town deed) to the absence of business transactions on the Sabbath. The 1885 directory has an entry for Henry, noting that it was formerly called Lariat. Several more businesses are listed including the Henry Mercantile Co., the *San Luis Valley Graphic*, a drug store and two blacksmiths. The *San Luis Valley Graphic* reported that “inquiries came daily from those seeking new land, particularly the area watered by ditches.” That year the town boasted 245 residents.

The town’s promoter, T. C. Henry, had borrowed huge sums of money from the Travelers’ Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut to build a network of canals that took water from the Rio Grande to

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irrigate farm land north of the river. When Henry incorporated the town, the town became involved in his canal debts. In July 1885 the Travelers' Insurance Company took over Henry's interests. The town was named Monte Vista and re-platted with incorporation papers filed on January 29, 1886. The 1887 Colorado Business Directory has an entry for Monte Vista noting that it was formerly called Henry. It is described as a growing town 15 miles southeast of Del Norte with a population of 400.

The early days of the town were marked with a spirit of religious cooperation. In May 1884, the Henry Town and Land Company deeded five lots to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Henry on which to erect a church building. The lots, numbered 17 through 21 in Block 3, were situated on Washington St. one block west of the business block. When the settlement was less than two months old, on July 14<sup>th</sup> 1884, Rev. E. C. Brooks effected the Methodist Church Corporation with thirteen charter members. Formerly the pastor of the First Methodist Church of Greeley, Brooks came from Eureka, Kansas. He arrived in Henry to edit the new *San Luis Valley Graphic* and to pastor The First Methodist Episcopal Church. The articles of incorporation for the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Henry were filed on July 16, 1884 with five elected trustees: Chauncey S. Aldrich, James Goodlander, L. M. Earnest, Ira J. Bloomfield and Lewis H. Cheney. Immediately after the incorporation of the new church, steps were taken to raise money for a church building. On March 19, 1886 (after the town's name change), the Monte Vista Town & Land Company conveyed the same five lots to the Board of Trustees of The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Monte Vista. A building committee was appointed on February 9, 1886 to procure plans and haul stone for the foundation of a church building. Construction began in 1887 on a chapel built of rhyolite stone. An early member of the church, Mary Peachy, conveyed by deed Lot 22 to the church on March 18, 1898. Lots 21 and 22 were then used to build the church parsonage. The foundation was laid in August 1901 and the parsonage was completed in 1904.

The church was partially destroyed in a fire on Sunday April 2, 1922 by an overheated stove. As reported by the *Churches in the Rockies-Southeastern Colorado*, the immediate response was that "a new and larger building will rise out of the ashes." In May 1922, a month after the fire, the members of the church building committee accepted plans by C. J. Anderson, designer and contractor from Alamosa, for a new church edifice. Clean up and excavation from the fire of the original church was started that summer. The foundation was laid with mules and scrapers in October 1922. Useable stones from the old church were cleaned and re-cut by Frank Duran, James Thrasher and William Nash. The re-cut stone was used as needed for the basement walls of the new church. James Thrasher furnished larger new stone from a rock quarry on Dry Creek southwest of town. Common red bricks (blackened by the first church fire) were also reused in the basement walls. The General Contractors were Frank Worth and his son, Wellington. Local stonework contractors were Ed and Will Nash. The unusual face brick, purple tapestry finish pressed brick, arrived in three train carloads from the Pueblo Brick & Tile Company in Pueblo. The Kansas City Stained Glass Co. created the beautiful stained glass windows and the oak pews were obtained through the Centennial School Supply Company.

During the construction period, church services were held in the old Armory, the Woods Mortuary, and the public school buildings. The new church building was completed to the point where it could be occupied early in 1923. A granite cornerstone was presented to the church by W. S. Woods of Monte Vista (a mortician) and Arthur D. Marvin of the Marvin Monument Company of Pueblo. The cornerstone, which simply reads "The Methodist Church 1923," was laid and dedicated on Sunday,



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April 15, 1923. A tin box was placed to the left of the cornerstone, containing documents with the names of the official board and building committee members, the names of contractors and builders, and some church items.

The ladies' Priscilla Society donated \$5,742 toward the \$6,625 cost of the Estey Company two-manual pipe organ, dedicated on Sunday March 9, 1924. The municipal organist of Denver, Clarence Reynolds, was sent by the Chas. E. Wells Music Company of Denver to give a recital on the new organ, on March 20, 1924.

The total cost of the new 16,700 square foot church building was \$63,350.11. In 1910, when the ladies of the church envisioned a new and larger church, they started a building fund and later donated \$3,500 to the project. With 206 names on the list of paid subscriptions, the building was fully financed by March 16, 1924 when the dedication service was held.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church organization name was changed world wide to the United Methodist Church in 1968. In Monte Vista, the name change to the Monte Vista United Methodist Church was incorporated in September 1970.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary includes Lots 17 through 22, Block 3, Monte Vista [Original Townsite].

1936 Sanborn Map

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[map of Monte Vista]

Property Name First Methodist Episcopal Church

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### PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs except as noted:

Name of Property: First Methodist Episcopal Church  
Location: 215, 219 Washington St., Monte Vista, Rio Grande County, Colorado  
Photographer: Dwayne Weyers  
Date of photographs: January 2003  
Location of Negatives: 215 Washington St., Monte Vista, Colorado

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Looking southwest from corner of Second Ave. and Washington Streets, showing east and north side of church; north and east side of parsonage.
2	East side, looking west.
3	North side, looking southwest.
4	West side (rear) with parking space by alley, looking southeast.
5	South side church and backyard of parsonage, looking northeast.
6	East side of church and north side of parsonage, looking southwest.
7	Pulpit, choir area, and organ console, looking southwest from balcony.
8	East side parsonage and partial south side of church, looking west.
9	South side church, looking northwest.
10	Back of sanctuary and assembly room with overhead doors, staircase and doorway to Dorcas Chapel, looking northeast.
11	From back of nave looking northwest towards the chancel and through the overhead door openings into the assembly room.
12	Basement dining hall, looking southwest toward kitchen and stairwell.
13	Basement kitchen, looking southeast.
14	Basement nurseries, looking south through French doors to exterior small doors on south side of church.
15	North side of parsonage through curved portion of ramp, looking southwest.
16	South side of parsonage, looking northwest.



**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
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**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Monte Vista Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series