

1882 BANGOR CHURCH

5370 LaPorte Road Bangor, CA 95914 Ph: 530.679.2112

Open: 12 pm to 2 pm (1st & 3rd Saturday) Closed January, July, August & December



History of the Bangor Church

On a hillside in the small town of Bangor, a tiny white church faces the southwest overlooking houses and buildings sitting among the oak woodlands. Bangor Community Church is adorned with a bell tower housing a 600 lb. bell, simple wood siding and tall windows. Inside the church there is a pot-bellied wood stove and the hardwood floors warped from age creak when you walk across them.

For more than 120 years, the church (now a museum) served as a refuge for the Christian faithful who flocked to the area in search of gold. The property was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church Trustees on June 15, 1882 by Rosa E. Payne, a Bangor hotel owner.

Among those trustees was Garner Osgood, a New Yorker who came to California in 1850 to search for gold. Osgood settled in Bangor in 1857 and started a 600-acre cattle ranch, according to his great-granddaughter Florence Prater. Osgood, along with another great grandfather of Prater's, Milton Darby, worked together to build what is now the Old Bangor Church.

The first preacher was a circuit preacher named S. Kinsey, who rode on horseback down from Brownsville to give the Sunday sermon. The museum still has the original Bible that was dedicated to Kinsey sometime after it was printed in 1874.

In the 1920s, the Reverend Luman Cole served two terms as preacher to the congregation. At the same time, the church was being used as an elementary school when the Bangor School was deemed unsafe and a new school was being constructed. At one time it also served as a place of worship for every major Christian religion.

In 1955 services were taken over by the American Sunday School Union. They continued until 1960 when attendance no longer justified their participation.

The old church was nearly torn down in 1963 when Hilda Taylor got Village Missions involved they sent a field minister to the area to revitalize the church. Wendell Hauber and his wife Amy were assigned

to Bangor and served until 1969. So successful were their efforts, that new facilities including a parsonage, social hall and classrooms were built on a 10-acre parcel on Oro Bangor Highway in 1981.

The Rev. Nick Castillo, a young and dedicated minister, along with wife Marion and their three children helped Hilda Taylor spearhead the effort to find a suitable use for the old church. The Butte County Historical Society was approached, and the board accepted title to the building on May 20, 1981. The church was restored and opened as a museum on September 24, 1983.

“We just outgrew the church, “ Hilda said. “We had to decide what to do with the old one. Tear it down, move it, sell it. We decided we wanted to keep it and asked the Butte County Historical Society if it would like to take it over.”

The society did, and the restoration project using volunteer labor and donated materials began. Among the volunteers were Donald Cope, Paul Padgett, Hal Trosin, Robert Bunting, Curry Taylor, Frank Dameron, Randy Hansen, Jim Dunn, Robert Taylor, Florabelle Rominger, Jack Spurgeon, and Jim Webster, to name a few.

The church is now a museum but available for weddings, baptisms, funerals, and other similar functions. As a museum, it has a lot of history to offer and is open the first and third Saturday of each month (except January, July, August and December) from 10 am to noon.

The Bangor Historic Church Museum is operated by the Bangor Heritage Committee under the auspices of the Butte County Historical Society. The committee members are Florence Prater, Eleanor Williams and Marjorie Daley.

We are looking for anyone who would like to donate items from the old days or who is willing to allow us to make copies of photographs or documents to add to our collection. Any donations would be greatly appreciated.

Want to Read More About the History of Bangor

Go to the **Butte County Historical Society website**

Check Out the Archives Section

www.buttecountyhistoricalsociety.org