



## THE GOLD AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH OF PINOS ALTOS, BUILT IN 1898

Early in the 1890's, a regular Methodist minister, a Mr. Ruoff, was assigned to Pinos Altos and Central City. He made his home in Pinos Altos and tried to interest people in building a church there as the population was about 1000 in those days. Under the auspices of the Methodist Extension board, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bell donated a part of their mining claim for site of a church. The ladies gave box supper socials, and bazaars to raise money and the men promised regular contributions from their wages. Mrs. Phoebe Hearst of the Hearst Interests visited the property at this time and became interested in the project of a church, but would not give a donation (\$300) until the church board agreed to have a reading room for the miners in connection with the church, she saying she would supply the reading materials and pay the expenses. This was agreed upon, but because some of the miners were of different denominations and felt uneasy about reading in a church they did not belong to, a curtain was made and placed between the reading room and that used for church services. After this slight alteration, the reading room became a very popular place. The church building was finished and dedicated on May 18, 1898, with the Rev. Ruoff, who was retiring, and the new pastor conducting the services.

As the population of Pinos Altos dwindled so did the size of the congregation so there was no regular minister and visiting ministers of the Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches came up for services on different Sundays.

As the congregation dropped off even more and there was no longer a need for ministers to come to Pinos Altos, the church building was used mainly for social entertainments, lectures, etc.

With the coming of the family car, the local residents found it easier to drive to Silver City even for these activities and the population was not great enough to support the upkeep of the building.