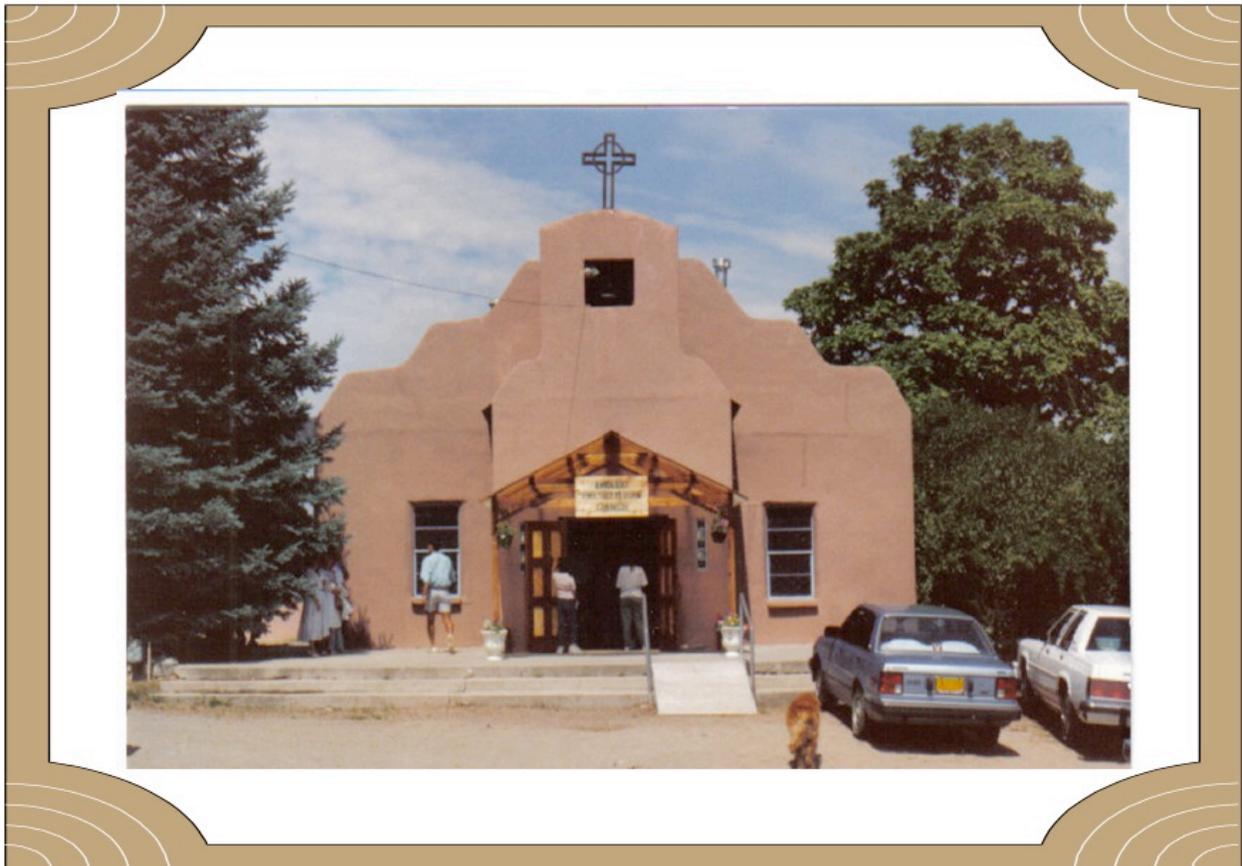


# EMBUDO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



## History of Embudo Presbyterian Church

by  
Charlotte Valdez  
charval@iwks.net

## ***In the beginning, and before that...***

On July 22 - 23, 1989, the Embudo Presbyterian Church celebrated its centennial 100 years. In commemorating the Centennial of the Embudo Presbyterian Church we are given a moment of pause. This is a joyous moment, (one in one hundred years!) and a moment of contemplation. As we marvel at 100 years of on-going family participation, questions can't help but come to mind. What relevancy does our participation in our Church have for our current life, the lives of our family members and the vitality of the community? Surely 100 years ago such questions were asked and answered with the exception of a new church in Dixon. We stand back and visualize this moment funneling (telescoping) out from that distant special moment in July of 1889 when a few individuals were converted to what was then quite an unorthodox faith. The origin of the Church was because a young child needed to be baptized and there was no Protestant Church available in which to have this religious event. The Church originated in 1889 when Juan Manuel Romero, Juan Julian Gonzales, Juan Montoya (the latter all elders); Juan I Romero, Deluvina Romero, Onofre Romero, Bonifacio Romero, and Narciso Gonzales joined forces and became the Embudo Presbyterian Church, a church without walls, without stained glass... The first church building was erected in 1899. By that time the congregation had grown so that even the new church was not large enough to accommodate the members. With the erection of the new church thoughts of a Mission School occupied the minds of the church members. A missionary had started teaching at Rinconada, and was being acknowledged for his labor and teachings.

Protestant missionaries, coming from the East, met children, women and men, for whom the sharing of water, land and labor were yet the nature of life; families who were in need of Christian education, spiritual guidance, and medical care. The people of Embudo and the missionaries shared in erecting the sanctuary, Mission building and the hospital. The first church structure was dedicated in 1899. This church later burned and the Reverend Tomas Atencio designed the second church which was erected in 1922. By 1910 the main part of the Mission school was up and functioning. After a day of hard work in the fields the men made 30,000 adobes, quarried and hauled the stone for the foundation of the school. The women manually mixed mud and lime to give the inner walls a whitewash, since there was no paint available. We imagine the strength of conviction and character it took for Eastern Missionaries, mostly from homes of relative ease to come bearing Bibles to a land of physical hardship, a land of subsistence agriculture, a land of little water. However, the missionaries met a people of humor and graciousness. The missionaries were strong and dedicated people who could return home if they weakened. The people of Embudo, Dixon and Rinconada had only this home; it took great courage and conviction to convert to a new church. Most of the new members converted to the Presbyterian Church because of their desire to provide better education for their children, and in doing so chose to send them to Mission schools because the quality of education was of a higher caliber. Some of the children were sent to Allison James (originally an all girls school), in Santa Fe, or Menaul School (originally an all boys school), in Albuquerque. We admire their strength to stand by their new found faith, for there is no doubt that they were subject to abuse and criticism within their community. Together these two interesting groups, the people of Embudo and the Eastern Missionaries built a lasting church, a hospital and a Mission School. But how did the idea of erecting a Mission School come about?

A young man Lucas Martinez opened a school in Rinconada, New Mexico, and carried on the tradition which was initiated by a non-commissioned Baptist missionary Susanna Thresher. Ms Thresher used to hold services in her home and rode a burro to visit many homes distributing Bibles and teaching the people about the Bible. A very young man Tomas Atencio used to accompany her in her visitations and became very interested in the teachings of the Bible. This young man went on to become an ordained minister in Dixon. An early story about Ms. Thresher who used to travel with a horse and two wheeled cart to distribute literature, and was sometimes accompanied by Tomas Atencio. As the story goes, during one of their treks their little two wheeled sulky struck a rock, the horse ran away, and both Ms. Thresher and Tomas Atencio fell to the ground. Upon seeing that they weren't hurt, just a few bruises, Tomas started to laugh. Ms. Thresher, a strong Baptist woman did not think it was a laughing matter and pointing a strong finger at Tomas demanded that he join her on their knees at the roadside and thank the Lord for their safety, which they did!

The little school was later moved to the center of a little plaza town, which is now Dixon. The whole community was called Embudo and a narrow gauge railroad was built through the mountains from Alamosa to Santa Fe, the railroad stop as called Embudo Station. When the little community north of the railroad opened its first post office the people in the community chose to name it "Dixon" in honor of Collins Dixon. Collins Dixon was a teacher who generously helped the people in the community. Mr. Juan Quintana was in charge of the school, and from 1893 - 1902. Ms. Kate Kennedy took over the school. This was a very difficult time for all teachers as the school was in one very dark room with only one window. Victoriano Valdez, a young man from the community was Ms. Kennedy's first interpreter in Sunday School. When he was 14 years old he brought an English Spanish Testament from an old man paying two burro loads for the bible. He united with the Church when he was 20 and advanced work in preparation for the ministry at Del Norte College and Menaul School. Other persons who were in charge of the school were:

- 1 **1904 – 1906** Ms. Elizabeth Rogers;
- 2 **1906 – 1908** Ms. Carrie E. Fenton,
- 3 **1909 – 1911** Ms Dora Fish was instrumental in building the first Mission school. The first mission school was called the Augusta Holmes Lockwood Memorial. The property on which the Mission was built was donated by Rubel Salazar from Cuestesitas. It was next to a store owned by Antonio Duran. The present (1994) Mission kitchen is on the building which was originally the Antonio Duran store. Cost to build the mission was \$3,837. Ms Fish and her assistant Ms. Haley not only taught school but also took care of the sick as there was a heavy epidemic of malaria and typhoid fever which claimed the lives of many children.
- 4 **1911 – 1914** Francis M. Davis. At that time two young men from the community entered the ministry and went on to become ordained ministers. Those two young men were Victoriano Valdez and Tomas Atencio. Tomas Atencio attended Menaul School and took his theological training at Del Norte College. After he was ordained he was placed in charge of the Dixon Church.
- 5 **1919 – 1916** E. Josephine Orton was in charge of the school and during this time two members were added to the staff. From 1916 – 1931 Ms. Sarah B. Sutherland was in charge. She introduced athletics and acquired playground equipment and organized classes in homemaking and manual arts in the school. The school playground was enlarged by the purchase of a small plot behind the Mission. After that more teachers were added to the staff which continued its

teaching mission until 1975. The first pupils who attended the mission school were Rev. Tomas Atencio, Juan A. Brown, Vicente Martinez, Leonardita Salazar, Pilar Salazar, Juan Antonio Salazar, Mrs. Anita Sanchez, Bonifacio Romero, Mrs. Inez R. Lucero, Mrs. Onofre R. Atencio, Reynaldo Romero, Mrs. Elique Duran, Mrs. Tomas Archuleta, Esquibula Montoya, Sara Sanchez, Juan Sanchez, and Mentor Romero.

- 6 **1929** - the school graduated 29 pupils from grammar school
- 7 **1930** an addition was made to the mission; one classroom at a cost of 600. The men in the community made the adobes for the new room.
- 8 **1932** the 4-H was organized. Edna Ludhe transferred from Chimayo.
- **1934** Literary society was enacted and a library was established.
- **1934** Cora Houk was named Executive of the School
- **1934** Weekly health classes were started and taught by nurses.
- **1935** PTA organized
- **1936** Summer program developed with help of Allison James and Menaul students.
- **1937** Dorothy Baines was named School Executive.
- **1939** Ms. Minnie Cook was named Director of Religion education and Sunday School thrived at the Church. Sunday school classes had to be moved to the Mission because attendance had increased substantially.
- **1948** Highway Department petitioned the Bureau of Land Management to grant a right of easement to improve the road adjoining the school. Easement was granted, and road was hard surfaced for the first time.
- **1948** Educational movies were shown for the first time. This was a great treat for the children. The Courts rendered a decision ordering public schools to cease teaching religion.
- **1948** Hot Lunch Program established. A house and lot, with a well adjoining the school was purchased. Then intent of the purchase was to set up a hot lunch program. Again, parents and children contributed money and labor to refurbish the building.
- **1949** Municipal water system established which meant that a lot of homes now had running water.

**1914** about a half mile from the school a tiny hospital was built, hidden in the funnel of the mountains, was built by the Brooklyn Presbyterial, and named Brooklyn Cottage Hospital. This place was called **Embudo**, which means "funnel", and was given this name by Spanish settlers in the 17th century. The hospital consisted of one nurse and a housekeeper, in a building that accommodated two patients. With the appearance of the first nurses health care for the area began. During the 1930's Dr. Sarah Bowen arrived and set up residence and regular health services for expectant mothers, new babies, the ill and injured. Eventually a surgeon, a radiologist, a dentist, and an itinerant Podiatrist joined the program. To pay for medical services rendered the families brought garden vegetables, Chicken, pigs, and their human muscle. Missionary reports express great appreciation for this direct payment. Barter was not new to the valley. The hospital experienced such growth that in 1940 the Embudo Presbyterian Hospital was built. During this time the Church and Mission buildings were being actively used for a multitude of activities such a youth groups, ladies sewing clubs, wedding showers, baptismal receptions, etc. Reflecting the post World War II years, the dispersion of the people of the community and arrival of new groups, the church and mission changed. The families of the Embudo Dixon community worked hard to create a strong public

school in Dixon. The Mission school closed its doors in 1965. Some of the graduates of the Mission school have joined the professions; education, medicine, law profession, engineers, social services and the ministry; others have stayed home and kept their identity with their field of alfalfa, rows of corn and chili, and apple orchards while also working in Los Alamos, Santa Fe, and surrounding areas. The Church has produced many ministers; Rev. Tomas Atencio, Rev. Victoriano Valdez, Rev. Julian Duran, Rev. Elias Atencio, Rev. Horacio Rendon, Rev. Eluid Valdez.

Minister who served in our Church were:

- 1 **1889 – 1900** - Rev. John Whitlock
- 2 **1900 – 1903** - Rev. W. C. Buell
- 3 **1903 - 1913** - Rev. Gabino Rendon
- 4 **1913 - 1931** - Rev. Tomas Atencio
- 5 **1931- 1936** - Rev. Eliseo Cordova. It was a very trying time for the young ministers because the Catholic priests watched their every move with a critical eye. By 1929 another young man from the community graduated from Emporia College, Kansas, and San Anselmo Seminary and was ordained in Dixon. By 1930 the church enrollment had grown to 169.
- 6 **1931** - Rev. Eliseo Cordova , who had been at Trementina for 16 years, and Raton for 10 years succeeded Rev. Atencio. He had a daughter Lydia Zellers, who became very involved in the Church and community activities. In 1947 she was part of a committee calling itself "The Free Schools Committee of Dixon" which went to court to fight the removal of Catholic religious practice in public schools. The case was won and public schools were relieved from teaching religious practices.
- 7 **1936 – 1946** - Higinio Ruybalid
- 8 **1946 – 1947** - Tomas Atencio again.
- 9 **1947- 1959** - Rev. Porfirio Romero. Rev. Romero married Rev. Victoriano Valdez' daughter Elizabeth.
- 10 **1960 - 1968** - Rev Richard Goodier
- 11 **1968 - 1975** - Rev. David Cisneros
- 12 **1975 – 1979** - Rev. Lewis Leon
- 13 **1980 - 1982** - Rev. Alice Brasfield (our first female Minister)
- 14 **1983 – 1988** - Rev. Carlos Nunez
- 15 **1988 to Oct, 2004** - Rev. Andrew McComb
- 16 **2007 - 2008** Mary Jo Lundy, Commissioned Lay Pastor

**1933** - The Mission supported a 4-H club starting in; a library opened in 1934. In 1939 the 50th Anniversary of the Church was celebrated. Church pews, altar, etc., were made by men who took carpentry classes held in the Mission Bldg. During Second World War the lives of the families in the community were deeply affected. Many families lost sons and husbands on foreign soil. Bataan is remembered in Dixon. But it was not only the deaths of boys and men that wrenched the community. The war took the men, and in some cases, the whole family out of the community of Embudo/Dixon/Rinconada. People were exposed to the urban life and the dream which that life advertised after the war. The departure of men from the area to work as railroad builders in Utah, Colorado, Idaho or Wyoming. In the early days perhaps on the original track that ended in Las Vegas had been lived with. Since the coming of Anglos in the turn of the century men have left to work as shepherds in Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming. Many went to these states to farm or harvest potatoes, or to work in the mines. Dixon's residents filtered into many of our neighboring states, and settled down in those states. What

happened to the descendents of those originators of the Embudo Presbyterian Church. We know that many Presbyterians were members of other churches previously, but let us explore their role in the development of the Church and impact to their families and the community. Where are the descendents of Juan Manuel Romero, Juan Julian Gonzales, Juan Montoya, Juan I. Romero, Deluvina Romero, Onofre Romero, Bonifacio Romero, and Narciso Gonzales? Also, the first Mission School students, Tomas Atencio, Juan A. Brown, Vicente Martinez, Leonardita Salazar, Pilar Salazar, Juan Antonio Salazar, Mrs. Anita Sanchez, Bonifacio Romero, Mrs. Inez R. Lucero, Mrs. Onofre R. Atencio, Reynaldo Romero, Mrs. Elique Duran, Mrs. Tomas Archuleta, Esquibula Montoya, Sara Sanchez, Juan Sanchez, and Mentor Romero. We will follow up on the families on other influential members of the church and their impact.

We will start with those young men from the community who went into the Ministry. Tomas Atencio's parents were Noberto Atencio and Pastorcita Griego. As a young man Tomas married Leonardita Salazar and they adopted two daughters, Andrea and Hilaria. Leonardita died of cancer, and later Tomas married Bernardita Roybal Mascarenas and the couple had three sons, Estevan, Tomas Jr. and Amos. Bernardita brought two children into the marriage; Bernie and Octaviano. Bernardita was previously married to Octaviano Mascarenas and their children were O.R. Mascarenas Jr., and Bernardita (Bernie). Victoriano Valdez's parents were Juan and Pelegrina (Lovato) Valdez who had several children; Victoriano, Aseneca, Diego, Agapito, Dolores, Anita and Antonio. Victoriano married Luisa Perea, Asceneca married Antonia Brown, Diego married Beatrice Salazar, Dolores married Juanita Lujan, Agapito married Eloisa Mascarenas, Anita married Silviares Duran, and Antonio married Escolastica Borrego. Elizabeth Valdez, one of Victoriano's daughter married Rev. Porfirio Romero. Diego was very involved with Church life and his son Eluid went on to become a Minister. His other son Alfonso married the former Olivia Romero, and was a military career man. Upon his retirement the couple and their children returned to Dixon and both became very active in the Church. Diego's daughters Mary Romero married Silviano Romero, and Ella married Alfredo Garcia; both ladies reside in Dixon and are active in the church. Dolores's family also were active in church activities. Some of Victoriano's relatives still reside in Dixon, others are scattered nationwide. Paz and Solidea Martinez, who are Lebeo, Izar (Charro) and Evila Martinez' parents adopted two boys as a young couple. The couple was Catholic, but they wanted to provide better education for the boys and so they sent them to a protestant school. As a result of this action the next Sunday that they went to church, their pews were taken out and they were no longer welcomed in the Church. Raleigh (Doc) Zellers was born in Lamar, Colorado, on 3-29-06. He met Lydia Cordova, who was a high school teacher at Lamar. They fell in love and married in 1927 in a little town above Lamar, Colorado. Lydia was born in 1906, in Cordova, New Mexico, attended school at James Allison, and graduated from College in Huron, South Dakota. Her parents, Eliseo and Priscilla Cordova, had a big ranch and a store in Trementina, near Tucumcari. Doc and Lydia moved to Trementina and Doc worked for Lydia's father, tending to the ranch and working at the store. Since Lydia's father was a minister, in 1930 he was sent to Dixon, and moved into the Tomas Atencio home, which is right next door to the Church. In 1933 Lydia and Doc moved to Dixon. They moved in with Eliseo Cordova. In 1935 Lydia and Doc opened up a store where the present "Zeller's Store" is located. Local storeowner J.P. Lujan was getting old and was very sick, Jose Medina also had a store where the rock building stands, but he too was getting up in years, so the Zellers opened their store in 1935 and Doc ran it until he started working for University of California at Los Alamos. Meanwhile, Abel Pineda and Alfredo Montoya started building the Zellers a house next

door to the store. Alfredo Montoya, a Canoncito resident also worked at the store with Lydia for a while. Lydia also did substitute teaching at the public schools. She taught music, drama and language. The couple had two sons, Gene and George. Lydia was very involved with the community and the Church. In addition to being an elder, she was also on the Board of Missions, Menaul School Board, Presbyterian Hospital Board, Member of Presbytery, and together with Ollie Bowen (Dr. Bowen's sister) they were instrumental in acquiring funds to keep Christian programs operating within the community. Lydia died in June 7, 1991. Art Montgomery, a native New Yorker (born 1904), was a mineralogist who was sent by the Federal Government to Dixon to look for minerals. He discovered the Harding Mine, and since he came from a wealthy family, he purchased it outright. The Harding Mine produced beryllium or beryl, which is a mineral used to harden iron and serves a multitude of other purposes. Some of these minerals were taken to Los Alamos, and were used in the construction of some of the first atomic bombs. It has been hinted that minerals used to make plutonium for the atomic bombs were discovered by Mr. Montgomery. Eliseo Griego, from Apodaca was his chief foreman. As he got older he donated the mines to the University of New Mexico, and requested that Eliseo, and later his sons Bernabe and Gilbert, oversee the mines. He lived in Dixon approximately 50 years.

### **Embudo Presbyterian Church**

The church has undergone many changes in the past 100 years. In 2001 a computer was purchased with money donated from the Women's fund. New cushions replaced the worn out ones, and the church aisle has been recarpeted many times, thanks to money raised by the faithful members. Handicap grab bars have also been placed in areas where they are needed to help those who need help going up stairs from the office to the sanctuary. In 2007 the handicap ramp at the church was torn down and reconstructed to meet federal standards. The money was donated by the Faith Berghofer family, and donations. This same year the church was stuccoed and the porch was restructured and extended. Money for this project was donations from Mission Embudo, Women's group and personal donations from church members. Additionally, a new piano was purchased from funds donated by the Women's group, Mission Embudo and general fund

### **Embudo Presbyterian Church Café**

In the early days of the Dixon Arts and Craft Tour (circa 1983), Mary Romero and Ruth Archuleta discussed the possibility of raising money for the church. Since there were a lot of people coming to the community, maybe some of them would want some warm food and a cup of coffee or a soda while checking out the different arts and crafts displayed in the community. They decided to set up a small trailer in back of the Mission building and serve food. On Saturday they sold beans, chili, and provided a tortilla with each bowl of delicious food. On Sunday, after Church Services, Grace Martinez came by and brought a tarima (bench) and a Coleman stove. She went home and made some sopaipilla dough. She returned to the small trailer and while the women rolled and cut the dough, she made the sopaipillas. The fuses kept blowing out so that problems ensued, however, Rev. McComb kept changing the fuses and turning on the electricity. The first customer to purchase our sopaipilla was Salomon Griego. This was a successful venture and \$86 was made that first weekend. The following year more women volunteered to help Ruth and Mary and so more money was raised. The kitchen was being rented by Jane Padberg, so our women could not use it for this project. Later on an agreement was made with Jane and she used half of the kitchen, and our women used the cooking area. Eventually, Jane moved into the apartment, so that the whole kitchen was utilized for this annual event.

## **Mission Embudo**

In the Spring of 2003, Mission Embudo project commenced. This project was through the efforts of Larry and Melanie Laurendine, who acquired a grant from the Barnett Foundation. The \$30,000 grant was for the renovation of the Mission Building, and the apartment. The two car garage was converted into two cozy rooms for rental purposes. The apartments were cleaned, tiled, painted, and now we have 3 bedrooms and the apartment sleeps 10 people. The men's bathroom was gutted and renovated, to include showers. A women' bathroom was made which also included showers. The floors in the kitchen, the big room and the "Thrift store" room were sanded and varnished, and took on a whole new look. All of this was accomplished with the efforts of church members who rolled up their sleeves and worked hard on this project. The project was completed August 2004. New windows were put in the apartment and a wall partitioning the apartment from the big room was also made. This building is used for many church and local activities,

Charlotte Valdez, Clerk of Session  
Embudo Presbyterian Church  
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