

FCCUCC History

Based on Kept by Grace Edited by Rev. Randi Walker

Congregational Members of Pasadena Presbyterian form a Congregational church **Dec,1885**

Met in the chapel at Sierra Madre College

Services morning and evening - Communion every other month 1st of month

Pulpit Supply

Arthur H. Smith 1885-1886 missionary on furlough from China

Mrs. L. Youmans, President Women's Christian Temperance Union of Canada April 18, 1886

Called Ministers

Rev. Dexter D. Hill 1886-1894

Pasadena City incorporation 1886

1887 1st building Pasadena X California - rose window / gothic window

Height of land boom 1880's

Temperance - working folks and liquor - post Civil War

1888 boom crash - congregation in debt

By 1890 fortunes lost, people left the area, including members

1890s White vs Asian residents - vigilante violence, exclusion

Chinese expelled from Pasadena in the 80's

1888 mission school for Chinese at the church

Rev. Herbert W. Lathe 1895-1902

Only minister full term in 1st building

Resigned for health reasons

1891 paid off mortgages, started relying on pledges in addition to offerings - then rented pews

Rev. R.R. Meredith 1902-1909

1904 moved to *Marengo X Green* - 2/3 of congregation

1/3 remained and became Neighborhood Church, Unitarian (bell at NCUU campus)

Congregations in the west more activist than reflective

Defined not by specific beliefs but way of doing things

"Spirituality for FCC was not a mystical experience or way of feeling, it was a way of thinking and behaving." p. 12

Rev. Daniel F. Fox 1909-1929 (retired) 20 years - liberal, open to science

1910 ministry to Japanese

1900-1926 9 Japanese Congregational Churches founded in So. CA (HIC, Montebello)

1942 internment -Pasadena Congregation failed to make report - mission not revived

Progressive politics, WWI and roaring 20s

1918 Spanish flu-1919

End WWI Armenian partnerships - members p18

Modern ecumenism - invention - optimism

Elected 2 treasurers - church finances - and benevolences (often a woman)

By 1920s Music program expanded, hired solo quartet

1925 Mother's Day "Faith of our Mothers" - language shifts for occasions

1923 property Los Robles X Walnut purchased \$47,000

1925 architects

1927 cornerstone

The Foxes were members for 10 yrs. after retirement

Dr. Edward Thompson 1929-1933

Through the worst of The Great Depression

Rev. Torrance Phelps 1933-1939

State of the world and Christian conscience

1930s Great Depression - debt from new building weighed - money big issue

Women found work easier than men

Raised 1/3 budget with food sales and boutiques of handmade items p. 25

30s-40- Franklin Roosevelt 4 terms "The Nation's Pastor"

Rep/Dem ideologies split more sharply p.23

International peace growing - young died in action concern - WWII

Deplored the war but saw it necessary

(like E&R Reinhold Niebuhr) resist evil - no COs in this church

No resistance to internment

Lawrence A. Wilson 1939-1947

1946 burned mortgage

Rev. Raymond Wasser 1947-1952

Focus on family and home improvement even church home

Uneasy with discussions with E&R - mergers

Cracks forming in congregation - lines of disagreement post-war

Still affiliated with Federal Council of Churches and World Council 1948 ecumenical movement = high

But FCC didn't vote merger with UCC in 1947

1600 members - one of largest and influential in So. CA p34

1950s major division, fragmentation dominated into 1970's

Plus building free of debt but not free of cost

Dr. Alden Mosshammer 1952-1958

1957 UCC formed - congregational autonomy at stake

Dr. William E. McCormack 1958-1963

1961 voted to join UCC p.39 - only 417 voted - active members
 100 members withdrew forming Mayflower Congregational Church in San Gabriel

Vietnam War 1955 to 1975

Nuclear weapons, the draft

As opponents left, FCC took stands on integration, peace, justice, women's rights

Dr. David Held 1963-1968

Mid 60's Pasadena busing integrated schools

Reuben Sheares So CA Conference staff attracting black families to FCC p41

Rev. C. Gordon Beale 1968-1971**Rev. John Flucke - Interim**

Bethel UCC joined FCC (German)

Rev. Patricia Robbennolt 1971-1981**Rev. Roger Robbennolt 1971-1981**

City of Pasadena - 1st co-pastors

1970s modern women's movement- Lib Register others listed p.42

Many members left, others came

Early 1970s financial disaster - tried to sell the building

FINANCIAL ANXIETY huge

1971 earthquake - Pas Pres federation explored

Objected to presbyterian structure - ended

1970s-80s building ministry with non-profits - hospitality

Sanctuary church

Rev. Bee Neufeld Interim 1981 to 1983

Opened The Depot for homeless neighbors

Membership thinning, life more complex

Sue Miele - "UCC is everybody under the sun and we hardly ever agree on anything" p49

Dr. Jeffrey Utter 1983-87

1987 Just Peace church

Interim....?

Rev. Byron Light 1989-1997

1993 ONA

Keith Haithcock (Assoc.) Youth & Building ministries (Left when budget balanced)

Rev. Willetta Helene (Files) Pastoral Care
Rev. Randi Walker, Minister of Education

Rev. Donna Babb (Interim) 1996-97

Rev. Inez Tarbell (Interim) 1997-98

1996-68 Merger discussions with Altadena UCC

Rev. Marlene Pomeroy 1998-2025

Rev. John Pomeroy 1998-2025

A whole bunch of stuff happened.

4 sabbaticals covered by Rev. Inez Tarbell (2002), Rev. Andrew Schwiebert (2009)
 and Rev. Anne Cohen (2019 & 2024)

Rev. Andrew Schwiebert (Assoc.) Youth & aSpire Ministry 2009-2027

Rev. Leo Lynch (Asst./Assoc.) Pastoral Care 2012-2019

Sold building 2018 - rented back before moving to 500 E. Colorado

Historical landmark status July 2018

2020 COVID

“Retired” July 2025

Search for Interim covered by Rev. Scott Furukawa and Rev. Anne Cohen

Rev, Dr. Sandy Tice Interim 2026-

<https://pasadenanow.com/main/city-commission-considers-landmarking-historic-pasadena-church>

<https://www.pasadenadigitalhistory.com/Documents/Detail/congregational-church/81328>

<https://www.omgivning.com/project/first-congregational-church-of-pasadena>

First Congregational Church of Pasadena

On a prominent one-acre site near the Pasadena Civic Center and Fuller Theological Seminary, Omgivning is working to convert the historic First Congregational Church of Pasadena to eighty residential units, while maintaining the original sanctuary and chapel as an event space and restaurant.

History

Designed as a collaboration between Leon Caryle Brockway and H.M. Patterson in the Gothic Revival Style, the three-story building with three basement levels and decorative bell tower were completed in 1928 to serve the growing members of the Pasadena First Congregational Church, which was founded in Pasadena in 1885. The church continued to serve its evolving congregation all the way through the early part of 2018 and was recently granted landmark status by Pasadena.

<https://www.gpsmycity.com/attractions/first-congregational-church-of-pasadena-37411.html>

First Congregational Church of Pasadena, Pasadena

The First Congregational Church of Pasadena, located at the prominent corner of Los Robles Avenue and Walnut Street, is a significant religious and cultural landmark in Pasadena. Founded in 1885, the church has a long history of serving its community, which is reflected in both its architecture and its progressive initiatives.

Architecturally, the church is a stunning example of the Gothic Revival style, a design collaboration between Leon Caryle Brockway and H.M. Patterson. Completed in 1928, the structure is notable for its elaborate decorative elements characteristic of the style. It features a three-story building with three basement levels and an ornate bell tower that adds to its majestic presence. The church's design includes two highly ornamented primary facades facing north and west, adorned with pointed arch windows and door openings that incorporate elaborate tracery. Additional Gothic Revival details include diamond pane windows with both stained and clear glazing, engaged buttresses with flared bases, and a large, eye-catching rose window.

The church is not only a landmark in terms of architecture but also in its social advocacy. It has been part of the United Church of Christ and was designated a Just Peace Church in 1986, underscoring its commitment to justice and peace. Reflecting its inclusive ethos, the church welcomes relationships among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and supports marriage ceremonies for such couples. This open and affirming stance makes it a pillar in the community for promoting inclusivity.

Moreover, the First Congregational Church of Pasadena offers specialized services catering to different age groups, including children, young people, and adults, highlighting its dedication to serving the diverse needs of its congregation. The church's importance was further recognized when it was granted landmark status by Pasadena, celebrating its historical and ongoing contribution to the community.

StoryCorps Interview from the Hughes Family

Julia Hughes interviews her grandmother, Bonnie Hughes, about her high school and college educational experiences growing up. The conversation moves to how she became involved with the women's equality movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Her impact on this church can still be felt! Interview recorded on 2022-09-13.

<https://archive.storycorps.org/interviews/julia-hughes/>



Pilgrim Pines Camp & Conference Center

Overview

Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center seeks to honor God and provide for all people a sacred space to follow their spiritual path to discover and discern God. This sacred land in which we meet calls us to act with concern for eco-justice for all creation. As a ministry of the United Church of Christ, Pilgrim Pines is welcoming of all persons without regard to age, race, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic position, handicap or denominational affiliation.

History

In September 1943 the Southern California Conference of the Congregational Churches took steps to acquire ten acres of property in the San Bernardino Mountain community of Oak Glen, near Yucaipa. The property had previously been used by a small school for the deaf. The cost was \$6,900.

Within the first year cabins were constructed, an old building on the property was enlarged to provide a lodge, a number of other odd buildings on the property were pressed into service, and an administration building was constructed above the parking lot.

In 1944, eight full-week camps were held at Pilgrim Pines.

The Conference purchased an additional 70 acres adjacent to the original property and within about 5 years more land was acquired, completing the camp area to its present size of 160 acres.

In 1952 architect Ralph Bowerman devised a master plan for the camp, a plan that has been largely followed. In 1953 new cabins were constructed and electric heaters were installed. The office building and caretaker's house were constructed around 1956-1957.

In the first twenty years the Conference invested \$75,000 in the land and 350,000 for the buildings. In 1986-87 a major fund-raising program, "Pilgrim Pines NOW", was undertaken to update the facilities which were showing the ravages of 35 years of constant use by thousands of people of all ages. What had started out as primarily a summer camp had more usage during the rest of the year by local church groups, public school week-long camps, and many other religious and secular agencies.

In 1983, Johnny Cummings, an Oak Glen neighbor and longtime supporter of Pilgrim Pines, gave the 40 acres of Johnny's Tree Farm to the camp. For many years, campers had been invited to sleep under the stars at Johnny's, and his generous gift makes that special activity possible for campers well into the future. Johnny's is also the site of the new high ropes course of Pilgrim Pines Camp.

Recent celebrations included the construction and dedication of a new fire circle and the "Field of Dreams", both of which were the result of the generous contributions of our Work Campers, the members of the Sun City United Church of Christ, the Treehuggers, and other Pilgrim Pines supporters. Dining Hall renovations, including the addition of two handicapped-accessible bathrooms and a beautiful deck overlooking the Field of Dreams. Full-pressure fire hydrants are newly installed throughout camp adding yet another measure of safety. In addition, our newly relocated and discretely shielded refuse area and propane tank sites demonstrate attention to the aesthetics of the natural beauty of Pilgrim Pines.

The Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ can be proud of the facilities of Pilgrim Pines, now conservatively valued at \$10,000,000 and serving over 14,000 summer campers and guests each year.

Come and be a part of the future of Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center!

<https://jobs.acacamps.org/profile/pilgrim-pines-camp-conference-center/114910/>