

Thin Places

Property Description

The Pasadena Covenant Ministry Center consists of eleven parcels of land on the corner of Lake and Santa Barbara in downtown Pasadena that were cobbled together over a period of eighty years beginning in 1922. The current 2.25 acres of land is valued at +\$20 million. There are ten structures on the property and enough doors to warrant employing our own locksmith. This includes five ministry buildings, two houses, a triplex, and two garages. The five ministry buildings comprise 35,000 square feet of floor space divided into one hundred rooms. Those rooms

include 5 larger gathering spaces, 34 classrooms, 12 offices, 12 bathrooms, 4 kitchens, and 30 storage spaces. The property is organized into three zones: *North Campus* with two homes and a class room structure on the north side of Santa Barbara; *Central Campus* with the Sanctuary, Gym, and Classroom structures; and *West Campus* with a home, three apartments, and the parking lot.



The first worship structure was built in 1922. This is now the Gathering Place building.

Brief History



Full Sanctuary in 1960's

Expansion Years—In the early 1900s, working class Swedish immigrants migrated to Southern California seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Twenty-six of those men and women pooled their resources and purchased property. Their first structure was erected in 1922. Over the next five decades the congregation grew to over 700 people. Additional lots were purchased and buildings were either constructed or adapted to accommodate the growth of the community. Over those fifty years, working-class immigrant outsiders transitioned to become middle-class insiders deeply invested in their adopted society.

Shared Usage—Beginning in the early 1980's, the congregation began a slow decline to the current size of about 160 people. Despite that, the facility continued to be used well. A Korean congregation and later a Hispanic congregation shared the property for a while. Social justice ministries focused on a specific human need—homelessness, tutoring, early childhood education, single motherhood, children with special needs—were planted and continue to grow at the facility. The number of people who use the property on a regular basis is currently close to the peak usage by the church in 1972.

The Nest—The Celts believed that the distance between heaven and earth was *thin* next to bodies of water. Over the past ninety-five years, numerous churches, parachurch and social justice ministries have been hatched at the corner of Lake and Santa Barbara. Church planters and missionaries got their start working in the neighborhood. We pray that in the years ahead, the Lord will continue to call laborers who share this plot of land, this thin place, for his mission to the world.