

## THE ORGAN

Los Angeles organ builders, Pete Sieker and Larry Abbott built the organ after the 1967 fire. Renowned organist, Ladd Thomas, served as consultant to the project and Dion Neutra, son of the church architect, worked with Mr. Sieker in designing the organ case.

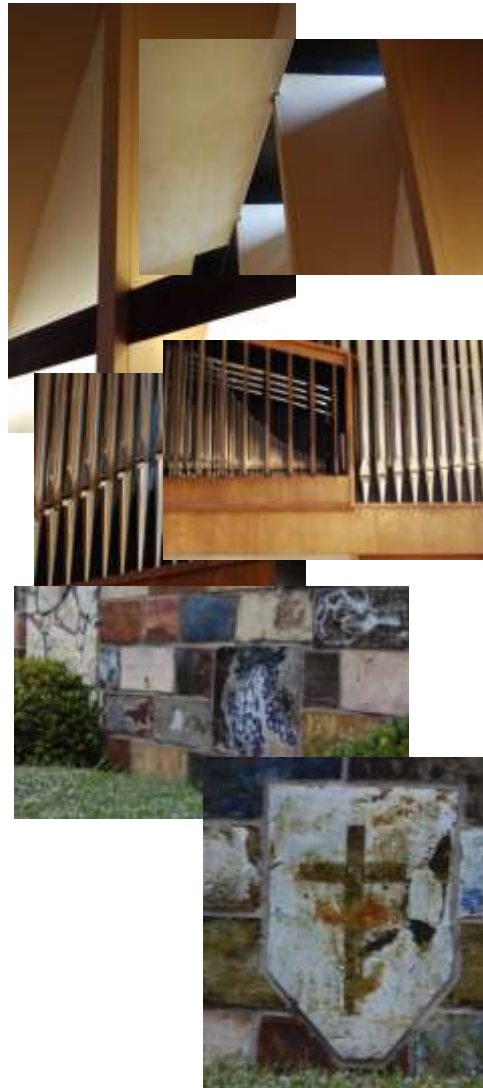
Organs produce sound by wind flowing into the pipes. Every key is coupled to a pallet (valve), which allows the air to enter from the wind chamber. Our organ uses mechanical action to pull each pallet down – so when the organist depresses a key, there is direct action through a tracker and rollers system to the pallet. This allows the organist to have more control over each note and the organ to be more responsive to the organist's touch. This is a centuries old mechanism that preceded electrical action. One way to think of it is the difference between driving a car with a manual transmission rather than one with an automatic transmission.

When the organ was built, it was the only mechanical (or tracker) action organ in Claremont.

The organ is small – but we hope you enjoy hearing it.



## CLAREMONT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



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## ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

CLAREMONT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



## THE SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary was designed by noted architect Richard Neutra, with the first service in the sanctuary on February 14, 1960. After a major fire in 1967, the sanctuary was rebuilt with the same basic plan, but on a larger scale.

While the building sits parallel to the property line, most of the design elements within the sanctuary are asymmetrical. The large sanctuary windows to the right of center are oriented to view the mountains, with the pulpit on the left side. The larger block of pews is centered on the pulpit to create a sense of mass.

Acoustics are enhanced by the east and west walls not being parallel. This creates an illusion of space by having the ceiling area larger than the floor. The clerestory windows on both sides give a floating sense to the walls – especially the west wall, which has windows at both top and bottom.

The dark brown of the west wall balances the outward thrust of the east wall with the weight of a heavier color. The light fixtures on the east wall are asymmetrical with the large globes on the west, balancing the outward thrust of the east wall, as well as the dark color of the west wall.

The broad V-shaped ceiling above the nave suggests the keel of a ship seen from below and reminds us of the

church as a ship, carrying its passengers, the congregation, to salvation. The two-tiered ceiling allows for a bank of lights, which illuminates the chancel.

The altar consists of a long, smooth wooden surface, resting on three legs, standing in front of the mountain windows, which suggests the elevation of the world above the altar.

The cross itself is freestanding. The simple lines of the cross are characteristic of Mr. Neutra's designs.

The building is designed for many uses and a variety of styles of worship. Everything in the chancel area, except for the tracker-action organ, is movable.



## THE CERAMIC TILE WALL

The ceramic tile wall in front of the sanctuary is a gift from the John Mixon family dedicated to Mrs. Mixon's father and designed and crafted by the Mixon's son, Lindley Mixon.

Lindley Mixon designed the plan for the ceramic wall and made sample tiles for approval by the Church's advisory committee. There was positive reaction to the creative use and rough texture of the ceramic tiles. The clay body and glazes reflect a variety of shades at different times of the day, blending with the environment, including the mountains in the background. Work on the wall was done with the approval of and in consultation with Mr. Neutra.

In 1962 the wall received a special award from the California State Fair, Art and Architecture Division. It was also exhibited as part of the 1981 Oakland Art Museum exhibit and received the Architectural Ceramic Award.



In 1982, as part of the Church's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, a limestone wall was erected and the tiles were set into it. Today, it stands as a reminder of the creative and changing process which is part of our Christian and artistic heritage.