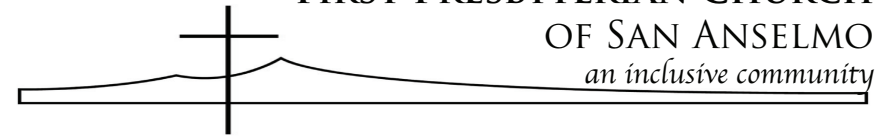


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN ANSELMO

an inclusive community



A Brief History and Self-Guided Tour of the Church and its Facilities

Duncan Hall

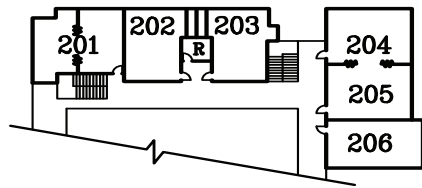
Our congregation came into existence on the **San Francisco Theological Seminary** campus in November 1897, shortly after the Seminary built **Montgomery Chapel** on the corner of Bolinas Avenue and Richmond Road. The first property to be owned by the congregation, at the corner of Ross Avenue and Kensington Road, was purchased in 1915 for a parsonage for Rev. Duncan and his family. In 1917, we purchased the **Bauer Estate**, extending from Ross Avenue to Mariposa Avenue and across from the manse, and is our present site. The large Bauer residence was remodeled for Sunday school classrooms until Duncan Hall was constructed.

The completion of the Golden Gate Bridge and the end of World War II greatly increased not only the San Anselmo population, but our church's membership as well. By 1947, architectural drawings laid out the proposed buildings. The social hall was to be the first building; it was used as an educational and worship center. Construction of our sanctuary would begin later. A capital campaign went through several phases, ending July 11, 1949, when ground was broken and building commenced. Duncan Hall was joyfully dedicated eleven months later, in May of 1950.

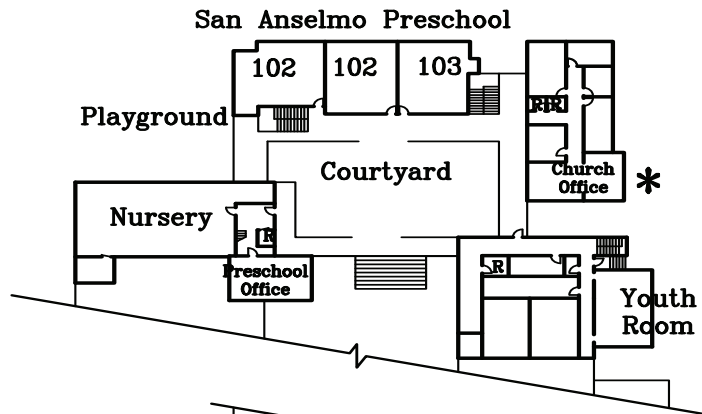
For eight years, Duncan Hall served a growing congregation. The Sunday School program served 300 children in 1953 to 715 in 1958 (with over 90 teachers!) Even with folding chairs and a moveable pulpit, with the choir on the stage, the church continued to grow, until by 1961 our membership had reached 1061. It was clear that the congregation outgrew their current facilities. So began a new capital campaign.

Duncan Hall continues to serve as the social hall for the congregation. It also now serves the larger community. For several years, it was used as the **Marin Whistlestop Active Aging Center** (promoting the independence, well-being and quality of life for older adults). Currently, in the offices at the rear of the building, it houses the staff and a day program of **Cedars of Marin**, for adults with developmental disabilities. The kitchen has been completely remodeled for commercial use. Most recently, Duncan Hall facilities are used in the winter months for the **Rotating Emergency Shelter Program (REST)**, serving the adult homeless population in Marin.

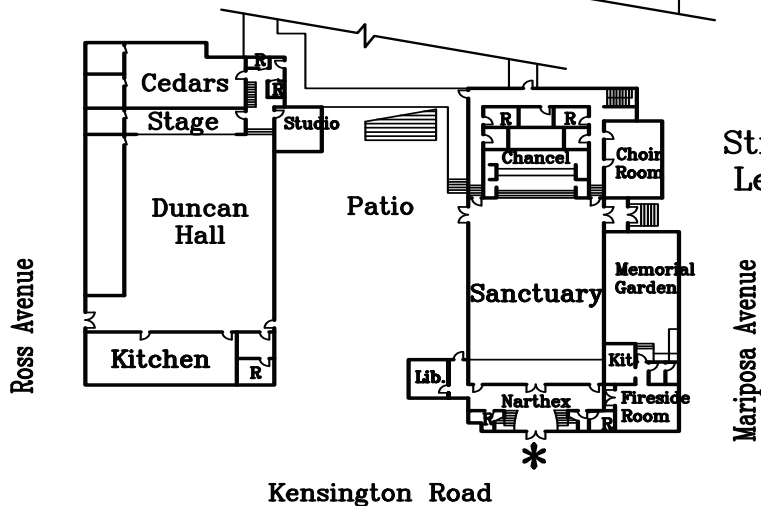
Upper Level
Classrooms



Lower Level



Street Level



The Sanctuary

Many decisions had to be negotiated and decided: the architectural style, whether to have a tower or not, rooms for Sunday school and youth, a pastor's study, where to place the choir, etc. In 1957, after more than three plans and several fund drives, ground was broken and one year later, in May of 1958, the sanctuary was completed and dedicated. A commemorative plaque was placed to the left of the church entrance.

The generosity of our members made possible the placement of stained glass in the nave and chancel windows, pew and chancel furniture and our two organs. Church leaders decided not to place any plaques or nameplates on any of the walls or furnishings; rather, donations were to be memorialized in a book, which is available for viewing on a stand to the right as you enter the narthex.

The two organs we enjoy are a great enhancement to the sanctuary and are enjoyed by congregation and community alike. **Beryl Buck** gave the first, in honor of her husband, the Leonard William Buck. Designed and built by **Laurence Schoenstein** of **Aeolian-Sinner Organ Company** in 1965, it was placed in the balcony. At that time, the choir moved from the chancel to the organ loft. The chancel was then rebuilt to eliminate the choir benches placed there. Alterations were completed by 1974.

A second organ, a Baroque organ, is located in the chancel. It is smaller and came from funds donated largely by **Beryl Buck**. Other funds were given by the **San Francisco Foundation**, which provided matching funds from the congregation and the Seminary. This organ was completed in 1984. (Built and installed by **Schoenstein**.) The central pipes became the base of the existing cross and the stained glass rose window.

Ten years ago, our last capital campaign raised funds for improvement and refurbishment of the sanctuary, including painting both interior and exterior, new carpeting, new heating system, refinishing the pews and other furniture. The church leaders also were determined to set aside ten percent of those capital funds for mission. These funds went primarily to support the rebuilding efforts in Gulfport, Mississippi, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

More recently, anonymous donations have made possible pew cushions and improvements to our sound system.

Just outside the southern side of the sanctuary is our **Memorial Garden**, a beautiful enclosed space for quiet contemplation, the final resting place for the ashes of beloved church members and friends.

The Education/Office Building

In 1964, church leaders began planning for classrooms for our Christian Education programs. After much study and another capital campaign, construction began in July 1967 and was completed 11 months later.

The design, as conceived and finalized, was a radical departure from the architecture of Duncan Hall and the sanctuary. Natural California materials, including wood shingles, natural wood stairways, open beams and outriggers, combined with vivid trim colors, produced a striking, rather post-modern effect. The building blended easily into the surrounding trees and the quiet suburban neighborhood.

In May of 1968, the congregation gathered in **Landon Patio** of the new building for its dedication. 14 years later, the faith and hard work, the perseverance and fine leadership of the congregation were celebrated on September 12, 1982, when the mortgage of the church was ceremonially burned: the congregation was free of debt!!

Like many other mainline churches, we have experienced a decline in church membership during the past 30 years, from over 1,000 to 350. Even so, the building is well used by many of our current programs, from Bible Study to Bell Choir to *Qi Gong*. The largest mission project of the church, the **San Anselmo Preschool and Afterschool Center**, occupies the lower floors of the building; while several community groups, such as **Alcoholics Anonymous** and the **Marin Girls Chorus**, regularly rent space here.

Our Associate Pastor and church leaders have plans to expand our vibrant children and youth programs to make more and better use of the facilities.

The church office occupies the lower, Mariposa Street side of the building.

*For more details, read our award-winning centennial history, **Our Past: A Window to the Future**, (especially chapter 7), which can be checked out of our church library.*

