The Sacred Spaces of Wilshire Boulevard
A Guide for Kids, by Kids
Introduction

This book came about because of our study of the history of Los Angeles through the history and preservation of the Sacred Spaces of Wilshire Boulevard. We learned about the history of the buildings and their worshippers.

We began this project by visiting the eight sacred spaces (seven churches and one temple). Each of our Advisory Groups went to two historic religious spaces. We had guided tours at each church by people who were knowledgeable. We took notes, made sketches, and took digital pictures of things we were interested in each church. We returned to school and organized our information. Then, we wrote drafts of our research report. We used the Los Angeles Conservancy’s guide to the Sacred Spaces in Los Angeles, published information prepared for us by the Los Angeles Conservancy, and the internet.

Fourteen students made up the Writers group. They compiled all of our information on big charts, one for each church. Then, the Writers along with the Advisors went to each church to make more sketches and to take specific pictures that the Writers needed to go with the text of this book.

With 22,000 organ pipes, First Congregational Church has the largest church organ in the world. When the biggest or deepest-sounding pipes play really loud, the church vibrates. The main doors to the church have large bronzed doors, each weighing 1000 pounds, with bas relief scenes from the life of Christ.

Fatima Cervantes and Alex Prieto, Editors

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First Congregational Church (2)

The Facts:
The tower is 157 feet tall. Built 1930-1932. City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

540 South Commonwealth Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90020
213-385-1341
www.fccla.org

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La Primera Iglesia de Feligreses, disenada por los arquitectos Allison y Allison, es la iglesia Protestant mas Antigua que ha servido a su comunidad en Los Angeles. La iglesia comenzó a funcionar en 1867 en el distrito de El Pueblo y con el tiempo, se establecieron al oeste hacia la Avenida Wilshire. El santuario esta construido en forma de cruz.

La Primera Iglesia de Feligreses es un ejemplo de arquitectura del periodo de renacimiento gotico Ingles. La complejidad de los tallados son los mismos de los tallados en la Catedral de Winchester en Inglaterra. Esta iglesia fue construida y reforzada con concreto, la cual da la impression de piedra.

Con sus 22,000 tubos, la organo First Congregational Church es el organo de iglesia mas grande del mundo. Siempre que se escucha los tubos mas fuertes de sonido, se escuchan vibraciones de la iglesia. Las puertas de bronce de la iglesia pesan millibras. En estas puertas de bronce, uno puede observar diferentes escenas de la vida de Cristo.

First Congregational Church is a Protestant church designed by Allison and Allison. Its tower is 157 feet tall. Built 1930-1932. City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

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Founder’s Church was designed by Paul Williams, a famous African American architect in Los Angeles. It is a modern building with rounded edges and no corners. The story told by the founder of the church is that it was made round so that there would be no corners where the Devil might hide. This round shape also symbolizes unity and wholeness.

The beliefs of Religious Science do not include crosses, pictures of Jesus or an altar. The table in the front is used only for the speakers.

Although there are no stained glass windows, Founder’s Church has a large mural painted on glass, to look like stained glass with no sun shining through—they use lights instead of the sun. Actually, this modern church with its nineteen-century does not have many windows at all. The expected four, theatre-style and theatre-stalls give it a more modern feeling than the other churches of Wilshire Boulevard.

Immanuel Presbyterian Church is a Protestant church designed by Chauncy F. Skilling and Henry M. Patterson Architects. It is an example of Gothic Revival architecture.

Immanuel Presbyterian Church has a rose window and original stained glass windows which demonstrate the Lord’s light. These beautiful examples of stained glass were created by Dixon Art Glass Company. The church has a large mural painted on glass, to look like stained glass with no sun shining through—they use lights instead of the sun.

The pews are unusual because they combine bench backs with theatre-style seats. That means that these pews lack backs, but each person has an individual seat. The organ at Immanuel Presbyterian Church has 4,000 pipes. The congregation presently includes Latinos, Anglos, Filipinos, Koreans, and African Americans.
Precious Blood Church is a Roman Catholic Church designed by Henry C. Newton and Robert D. Murray Architects. It is in the Italian Romanesque style with rounded arches and a beautifully painted ceiling.

There is a large altar with a huge mosaic mural made from small tiles in vivid colors with lots of gold. When the church was first built, the wall was blank. The mural was added later when the church was able to raise the money for it. A crucifix hangs in front of the mural behind the alter. Also made of mosaic tiles are the fourteen pictures of the Stations of the Cross.

The rose window of Precious Blood Church has an ornate frame of concrete which adds to its beauty from the outside. There are plain wooden pews with kneelers for people to use during prayer.

This church sits on swampy soil and required 150 reinforced pilings driven to an average depth of 22 feet to support the building. The church is built of concrete, and the walls are hollow to reduce the weight on the pilings of the foundation.

435 South Occidental Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90057
213-389-8439

Precious Blood Church (1)

The Facts:
Built in 1926
No landmark status

St. Basil's Roman Catholic Church (6)

The Facts:
The tower is approximately 100 feet tall
Built 1969
No landmark status

This modern style Roman Catholic Church was designed by Albert C. Martin and Associates. The new concrete church replaced an older wooden church which was designed by Albert C. Martin and Associates. The building is made of twelve separate columns, representing theTwelve Tribes of Israel, and the Twelve Apostles, that are connected by the stained glass windows.

There is no Rose Window. Instead, the angular windows are of stained glass, but they don't tell a story or relate to Biblical scenes. The windows deliberately look unfinished to draw one’s eyes toward Heaven. Their geometric shaped design start with large shapes on the bottom and get smaller as they go up. Really, they are only the front frames with no glass at all. That is what makes them look unfinished.

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Not only is the architecture of the building modern, but the features inside the church are of a modern style. For example, the Crucifix above the altar is surrounded by a very modern sculpture made of aluminum that makes it look as if it is suspended in midair. The aluminum walls have no cushions, but they do have kneelers for praying. In the narthex there is a very large statue of St. Paul and another of St. Peter.
St. James Episcopal Church was designed by architect Benjamin McDougall. It was built in a Gothic style of concrete covered with stucco.

The stained glass windows, created by Judson Studios in Highland Park, each tell a story. The top part of each window relates a scene from the Bible while the bottom part shows how that scene might be practiced by families today. Originally, the windows were made of pale glass, and the rich colors were added as the church had more money to replace the old windows. The dome ceiling is high and pointed, and the cross beams and ceiling beams are shaped like the hull of a boat, symbolizing God carrying His people through the storms of life.

Similar to Immanuel Presbyterian Church, the ark is decorated with small circles that somewhat resemble a rosette. The Ark is decorated with small circles that somewhat resemble a rosette. In front of the Ark hangs the eternal light. The pews are somewhat like those in Immanuel Presbyterian Church, with bench backs and blue-cushioned theater seats.

The Facts:
Built 1925 - 1927
No landmark status

Wilshire Boulevard Temple (II)

Today’s Wilshire Boulevard Temple is the first home of the oldest Jewish Congregation in Los Angeles. It was designed by Adelman, Allison and Norton Architects in a domed structure. It has a very large dome which makes you think that the whole building is round. But it actually is octagonal.

On the inside, the dome is awesome. It rises up from the sanctuary as an octagonal and joins at the top as a circle.

The Facts:
The dome is 100 feet in diameter
Built in 1929
City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument
National Register of Historic Places

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Built in 1929
City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument
National Register of Historic Places
Wilshire Christian Church was the first church to be built on Wilshire Boulevard. In 1910 the congregation met in a tent after being founded by Robert Orr. The present church was built in 1926 at 634 South Normandie Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90005. The architect, Robert Orr, was a member of this church.

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The Sacred Spaces of Wilshire Boulevard: A Guide for Kids, by Kids represents the culmination of a semester-long collaborative project between CityLife Downtown Charter School and the Los Angeles Conservancy. Located in the Historic Core of Downtown Los Angeles, CityLife Downtown Charter School is a neighborhood school that draws on the city's cultural, artistic, political, business, and community resources to provide a challenging, interdisciplinary, academic program in collaboration with partners. CityLife promotes individual and social responsibility, encouraging students to build new voices, to understand and appreciate differences, to question within their communities, and to develop into adults who recognize strengths and weaknesses with self-value and respect. The Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the architectural and cultural resources of the Los Angeles area. The project, in collaboration with CityLife, represents a new program combining a tour on October 2, 2005, with other events, a website, and guidebooks for adults and youth.

At 76 of the sixth-grade students at CityLife participated in the Sacred Spaces project, visiting the historic churches, conducting research, composing and illustrating the guide. They are to be commended for their diligence. Their voices, and their stories, represent the diversity that is Los Angeles. CityLife students: Xochilt Alvarez, Jennifer Amaya, Andrea Arceo, Janice Avalos, Danny Gama, Jazmin Guerrero, Diana Gutierrez, Tony Maldonado, Rachel Marquez, Areli Palma-Olvero, Ana Sanchez, James Slong.

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Map/Legend
1. Precious Blood
2. First Congregational
3. Founders Church
4. Immanuel Presbyterian
5. Wilshire Christian
6. St. Basil's Catholic
7. Wilshire Blvd. Temple
8. St. James Episcopal

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