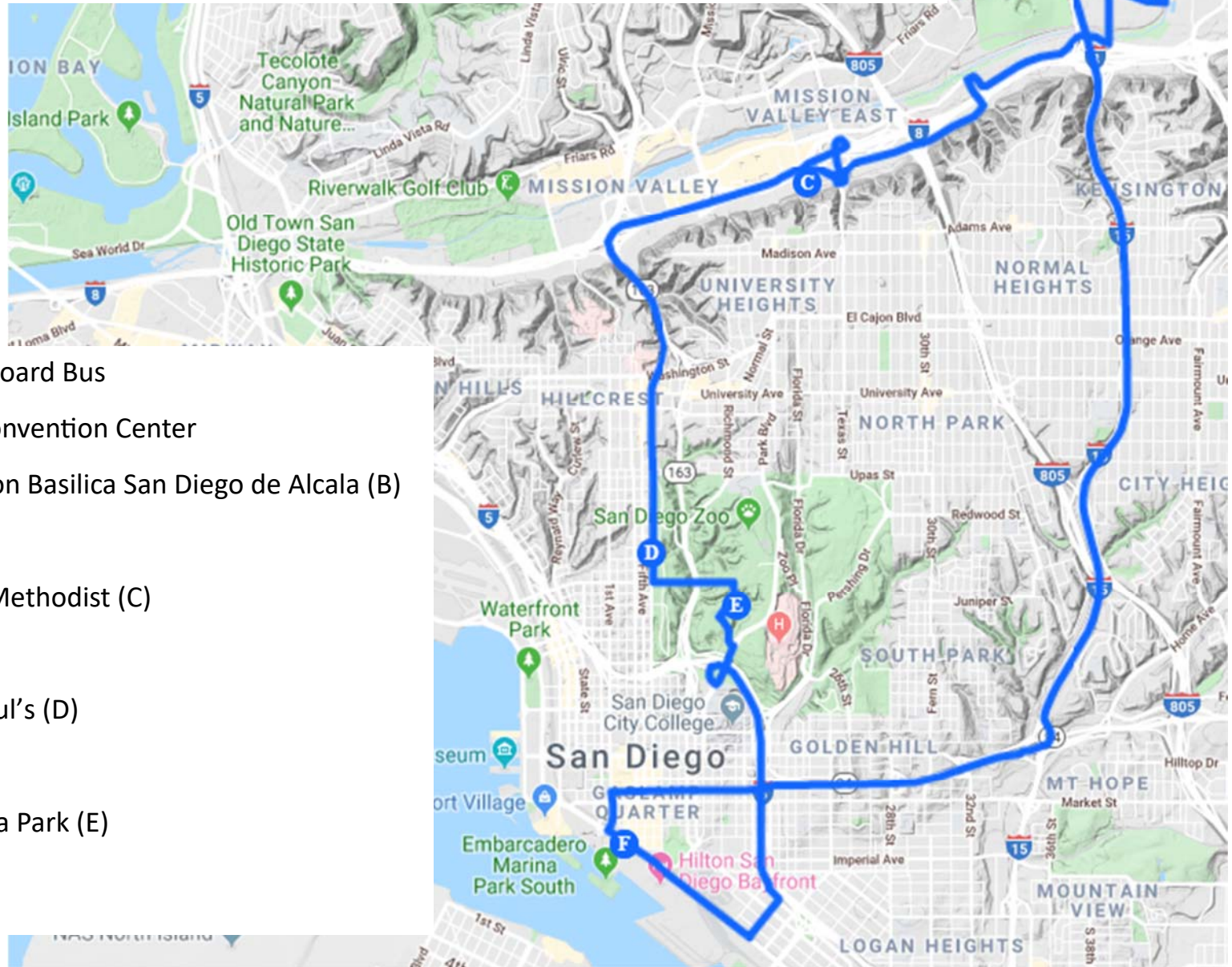


## Sacred Sites Tour – San Diego, California

David Bains, Samford University; Daniel Sack, Washington, D.C.

A25-238 American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 25, 2019, 1—5 p.m.



12:45 Assemble and Board Bus

1:00 p.m. Leave the Convention Center

1:25 p.m. Arrive Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá (B)

2:30 p.m. Depart

2:45 p.m. Arrive First Methodist (C)

3:15 p.m. Depart

3:30 p.m. Arrive St. Paul's (D)

4:00 p.m. Depart

4:10 p.m. Arrive Balboa Park (E)

4:40 p.m. Depart

## **San Diego Sacred Sites Tour**

David R. Bains, Samford University

Daniel Sack, Washington, D.C.

American Academy of Religion, Annual Meeting

A19-234, meet at Convention Center registration desk

Text by David R. Bains

### **Introduction**

San Diego is noted for its early Spanish missions, the exotic buildings of its world's fairs in Balboa Park (1915-16, 1935-26), and its embrace of twentieth-century modernist architecture. This bus tour will examine these themes as it explores several historic religious sites. The oldest of our stops is the Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá founded in 1769 as the first Spanish mission in California. It was rebuilt in 1931 to its 1813 appearance and began operating as a parish church in 1941. Next we will also visit the stunning modernist First United Methodist Church (1964), which incorporates an exterior garden as devotional focal point. From there we will travel to St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral (1951), a Gothic revival church designed by Philip Frohman, supervising architect of Washington National Cathedral. Our last stop is Bertram Goodhue's campus for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. Its architecture established a sumptuous revival of Spanish colonial architecture. The fair's exhibits united modern innovations with exotic presentations of cultures and religions.

The City of San Diego has an estimated population of nearly 1,500,000 and is part of a cross-border metropolitan area of nearly 5,000,000. Historically home to the Kumeyaay people it was claimed for Spain in 1542, but the first European settlement did not take place until the Mission San Diego de Alcalá was established in 1769. This, our first stop, is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year.

As a result of the Mexican-American war, California was ceded to the United States in 1848. American negotiators insisted that San Diego with its large safe harbor be included in the American territory. Earlier settlements were further inland, but in the late 1860s, Alonzo Horton promoted the development of a bayside area that became downtown San Diego. It is from this time that the congregations at our second two sites date. Both First United Methodist and St. Paul's Episcopal are celebrating their 150th anniversary this year.

Significant naval presence in San Diego began in 1901 and expanded significantly in the 1920s. The connection to national defense increased greatly during World War II. The city was also a major center for tuna fishing into the 1970s when foreign competition led to the closing of canneries.

Like many American downtowns, San Diego's declined in the 1960s and 1980s, but was rejuvenated in the late twentieth-century in part by the creation of a convention center. The San Diego Convention Center opened in 1989 and doubled in size in 2001.

### **Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá**

10818 San Diego Mission Road, San Diego, CA 92108

(619) 281-8449 [www.missionsandiego.org](http://www.missionsandiego.org)

**Mission:** San Diego de Alcalá was the first of the twenty-one missions established by Franciscans in eighteenth-century California. It marks the birthplace of Christianity on the west coast of the United States. It is named for Didacus of Alcalá (d. 1463).

The mission was established on July 16, 1769, by Junipero Serra. Due to poor soil and other problems it moved five years later to the present site. The mission was built and expanded several times.

After Mexico achieved its independence from Spain in 1821, the missions received less support than before. In 1834, the mission was removed from Franciscan administration and given to the Mexican government. In 1840, Francisco Garcia Diego y Moreno, a native Mexican Franciscan, was appointed as the first Bishop of the Californias, with the see at Mission San Diego de Alcalá. Arriving here in late 1841, Diego quickly determined the place too poor and insignificant to be his see and moved his residence to Santa Barbara. The mission lands were sold in 1846.

The U.S. Army occupied the mission grounds after the Mexican American war in 1848 converting the church into a two-story building. The Army left the grounds in 1858 and approximately twenty-two acres were returned to the Catholic Church by the American government in 1862.



Mission San Diego de Alcalá By Bernard Gagnon - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=26392434>

**Restoration:** The site remained abandoned until 1891 when St. Anthony's Industrial School for Indian children was moved from Old Town to the mission grounds, but after sixteen years this school closed.

In 1931, as part of a nation-wide Colonial Revival, the mission was rebuilt to what architects J. E. Loveless and J. Marshall Miller determined the 1813 mission probably have looked like. It represented an academic twentieth-century view of a Spanish colonial mission.

As San Diego grew and more people moved into suburban developments in the area, the mission was made a parish church in 1941. In 1976, Pope Paul VI designated it as a minor basilica. As a sign of its basilican status a red and gold umbrella or *umbraculum* and a *tintinnabulum*, or bell banner are displayed in the church.

Currently the parish holds masses every weekend and is served by three priests. This year it has been celebrating its 250th anniversary. Tours of the mission are a staple of the fourth-grade California history curriculum.

#### For Further Reading:

- Beebe, Rose Marie, and Robert M. Senkewicz. *Junípero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015.
- Kimbro, Edna E., Julia G. Costello, and Tevvy Ball. *The California Missions: History, Art, and Preservation*. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2009.
- Sandos, James A. *Converting California : Indians and Franciscans in the Missions*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 2004.



## First United Methodist Church

2111 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108

619-297-4366 <https://www.fumcsd.org/>



Figure 1 First United Methodist, San Diego, Interior.

**History:** First United Methodist Church traces its origin to a prayer meeting held on February 6, 1869 in an army barracks near the current site of Seaport Village. A few months later the congregation bought two lots on the northeast corner of Broadway and Fourth Avenue where it erected a white wooden church seating three hundred. In 1887, the wooden structure was replaced with a three-story brick building. Known as the First Methodist Episcopal Block. The innovative structure included income producing commercial space on the street level and congregational space on the upper floors.

Twenty years later the congregation moved to 9th And C Streets and a Gothic revival structure designed by San Diego architect Irving Gill (1870-1936). The auditorium sat 1,500 people and served the congregation until it moved to Mission Valley in the 1960s.

The congregation purchased 10.5 acres in Mission Valley in 1958 amid dairy farms and corn fields. Its new church designed by Reginald Innwood was completed in 1964. Innwood designed many modernist churches and campuses in Southern California.

In its liturgical plan and general aesthetic, the church reflects the influence of the Gothic revival on mainline Protestantism. A tall symmetrical nave leads to a raised platform where facing choir styles form a processional path leading toward a distant altar. Like the United States Air Force Cadet Chapel (Walter Netsch, 1962), however, this space is crafted from visible modern materials, in this case concrete parabolic arches. Particularly at First Methodist is the clear glass window which looks out onto a prayer garden. The Gothic was often celebrated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as natural and organic. Here living plants help create the environment for worship. The sanctuary was renovated in 1988. The active congregation holds three services on Sundays.

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Ames-Cook, Krista. *First United Methodist Church of San Diego*. Charleston, SC: Aracdia, 2018.

Buggeln, Gretchen Townsend. *The Suburban Church: Modernism and Community in Postwar America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Heffner, Stephen. "San Diego's Neo-Grotesque Churches." *San Diego Reader* February 18, 1982.

<https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/1982/feb/18/cover-a-house-of-worship-is-a-bizarre-thing-to-b/>.

Price, Jay M. *Temples for a Modern God: Religious Architecture in Postwar America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

## St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral

2728 Sixth Ave, San Diego, CA 92103

(619) 298-7261 <https://www.stpaulcathedral.org/>

The origins of St. Paul's can be traced to the city's first Protestant congregation which was organized in Old Town in 1853. With the development of New Town (the current site of downtown San



*Elevation Drawing, Proposed St. Paul's Church and Tower, 1948. Courtesy of St. Paul's Cathedral Archives.*

Diego), Holy Trinity Episcopal Church was established in 1869 built a new church at the corner of 8th and C Streets in 1887 taking the name St. Paul's.

Church leaders purchased the present site on Banker's Hill adjacent to Balboa Park in 1919. Four years later they authorized the rector, Rev. Charles L. Barnes, to approach Philip Frohman (1887-1972). Born in New York City, Frohman enrolled in the Throop Polytechnic Institute in Pasadena at age

eleven, attending grammar and secondary school. In 1907 he graduated and became the youngest person ever to pass California's state architectural exam. The following year, he opened his own office in Pasadena focusing on the design of homes and houses.

After service in World War I, Frohman to Boston, Massachusetts, where he formed a partnership with E. Donald Robb and Harry B. Little who had both worked in the Boston firm of Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Goodhue. Frohman became most as the chief architect of Washington National Cathedral from 1921 until his death in 1972. But he designed many other buildings including the

chapel at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and St. Paul's Cathedral in San Diego.

As early as the 1910s parishioners of St. Paul's anticipated that their parish would be the cathedral of a new Episcopal diocese when San Diego was divided from Los Angeles. As such they envisioned a grand church for their Banker's Hill site. The Episcopal cathedral projects at New York, San Francisco, and Washington motivated similarly grand projects in many cities such as San Diego, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Due to the economic realities of the Great Depression and the post-war period however. The cathedral at San Diego, like those in the other cities, never was built on the scale of envisioned in the 1920s.

The first unit of the new church, known as the great hall. was dedicated in 1928. The stock market crash the next year derailed further building plans until 1947 when the church reestablished its contract with Frohman. Many on the vestry were no longer in favor of as grand a church as envisioned in the 1920s yet Frohman had developed into a perfectionist through his repeated revisions to the design of the Washington cathedral. At last groundbreaking for a new church took place in 1950 and the first service held in it in 1951. The church was expanded by the addition of a south transept and chapel in 1960. At length, in 1973 the Diocese of San Diego was created and in 1985 St. Paul's was designated as its cathedral.

Presently, St. Paul's describes itself as a "cathedral for the city." Worship services are offered every day and Sunday services are celebrated in English and Spanish.

### For further reading:

Koelsch, William A. "A Gothic Architect in San Diego: Philip H. Frohman and the New St. Paul's Church, 1920-1966." *Journal of San Diego History* 51, no. 1 (2005): 42-60. [http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/v51-1/pdf/2005-1\\_cathedral.pdf](http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/v51-1/pdf/2005-1_cathedral.pdf).

Row, Christopher Dean Hamilton. "World without End: Philip Hubert Frohman and the Washington National Cathedral." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999.

Williams, Peter W. *Religion, Art, and Money: Episcopalians and American Culture from the Civil War to the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

### **Balboa Park and the Panama-California Exposition of 1915**

Civic Leaders in San Diego made their first bid to become a major American city by staging the Panama-California Exposition from January 1, 1915 to January 1, 1917. This exposition celebrated the opening of the Panama canal, but was a rival to the exposition that officially celebrated the opening of the canal, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco.

In 1911, Bertram Goodhue was chosen as architect of the exposition. Initially he was partnered with San Diego architect Irving Gill, but Gill soon resigned and was replaced with Goodhue's assistant Carleton Winslow. In many respects, the exposition followed the pattern established for world fairs by the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Pavilions featuring historical exhibits and technological advances were arranged in a classical formal court while a separate area (here called the Isthmus) housed exhibits on non-Western cultures and amusements.

The San Diego exposition broke new ground, however, through Goodhue's forceful expression of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. He turned away from both the strict neo-classicalism of the Beaux-Arts tradition and the modest Western revival styles influenced by California missions and southwestern Pueblo to the more ornate Spanish Baroque with its elaborate Churrigueresque ornament.

The classic expression of this is the California Building which Goodhue designed himself. (It is now the San Diego Museum of Man.) Its tall tower and brightly colored dome located at the entrance to the exposition high above the canyon became the very

symbol of San Diego. Inspired by Mexican churches it became a model for other churches and civic buildings.



Another distinctive legacy of the Exposition is the Spreckles Organ. With over 5,000 pipes it is the largest outdoor pipe organ in the world. Free concerts are offered every Sunday at 2 p.m.

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Bechtol, Jonathan. "1915 Panama-California Exposition." Cal State San Marcos. 2009.

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Oliver, Richard. *Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983.