

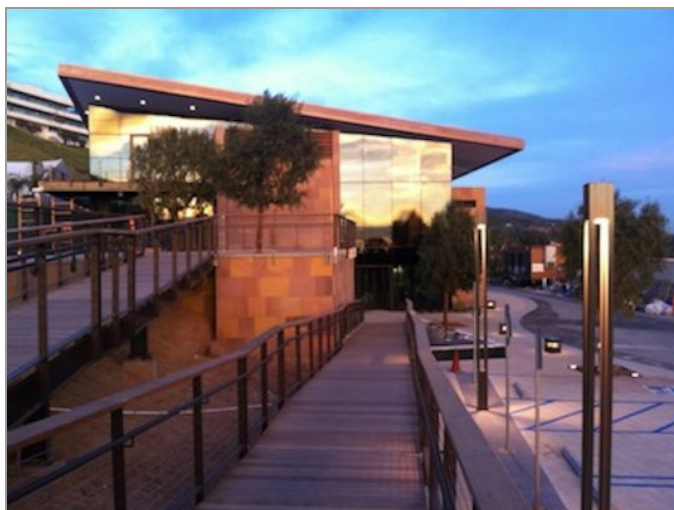
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Malibu Church Worships in Sanctuary Rebuilt After Wildfires

Added July 31, 2013

Earlier this year, hundreds of Malibu Presbyterian Church members joined together for the first service in their new sanctuary. The 8,000-square-foot church replaces the original structure destroyed when the Canyon Fire roared through Malibu on Oct. 21, 2007. Built on the hillside above the Malibu coastline, the new glass-walled house of worship was designed by San Diego-based domusstudio architecture.

While members and church leaders stayed together, first in borrowed space and then in temporary buildings on the site, the new church has been a long time coming.

“As I stood in the completed sanctuary, taking in the views and thinking about what people would say when they stepped inside for the first time, it struck me that this process has been all about renewal—not just of a building, but also of faith,” says Lew Dominy, principal at domusstudio.

The church’s steel beam cross, which stands on the chancel as a symbol of faith, was salvaged from the fire and incorporated in the new sanctuary. Otherwise, the physical structure was completely wiped out by the fire, leaving the church and architect with a big task at hand.

The design process took four years, beginning with meetings with church leaders and members to come up with plans that captured their desire for a memorable place to worship.

“Not only were we challenged by church members to create a worship venue that captured the coastline views, but also to create a space that was acoustically correct for their worship style; a challenge in a glass box,” says David Keitel, senior associate at domusstudio. “On top of that, we had to contend with stringent seismic and wind zone regulations and the highest fire rated zone in the state.”

Two-hour fire resistant, stone-clad exterior walls, a single-sloped copper roof and non-combustible materials throughout helped meet the fire requirements, he explains. Meanwhile, they used tinted laminated glass, high-efficiency lighting and mechanical systems to improve energy efficiency and reduce the structure’s

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"This project was about more than just building a church," says domusstudio's Mark O'Brien, who also worked on the project. "It was also about incorporating what parishioners loved about their old sanctuary, and creating a worship experience that could be even better."

Theater seating that wraps around the curved chancel will create a sense of community; a new balcony offers a more relaxed worship experience; and a cutting edge video wall and sound system enhance the church's contemporary worship style, notes O'Brien.

The sanctuary is only the first step in restoring Malibu Presbyterian Church. Construction on a 9,000-square-foot administrative office and preschool building is underway. Future plans for a Community Center open to all Malibu residents is also in planning stages.

www.domusstudio.com; www.malibupres.org

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