

WHAT IS CRAFTSMAN DESIGN?

The City of San Dimas looks for Early California décor in its buildings. Faith Lutheran Church is building and furnishing our new worship and ministry building in a Craftsman style. What is Craftsman design?

The Arts and Crafts movement began in England in the 1880s out of a desire to value the handwork and skills that were being lost to industrialization and mass production. This movement sought to create a look that unified interior space and its furnishings into a work of art.¹ A core value of this movement was that all objects in a room should be **both beautiful and useful**.

The movement spread to the United States and flourished until about 1915, particularly in the architecture and interiors of Greene & Greene and the “Mission” oak furniture of Gustav Stickley, as well as in objects of everyday life², including various print fonts like the one we are using in current FLC publications.

The Craftsman movement, as it was called in the United States, was further refined as the California Craftsman style and made popular by Greene & Greene. While the California Bungalow is the best-known expression of this style, the finest example is found in The Gamble House (www.gamblehouse.org), a national treasure in Pasadena that gives regular tours.

Greene & Green sought to develop an indigenous **Southern California style of design and construction**.³

Bob Moore, a contractor and FLC member, says this about Craftsman design: “I appreciate the style for its philosophy of esthetically pleasing **form that is functional**.”

Jeff Tortorelli, the designer and builder of our altar furniture, says, “You ask what my understanding of the style is and immediately my feeling is one of **natural flowing lines** (nature captured) and sensuality which to me is found in all things created by God. There is a softness combined with incredible strength and stability. The pieces invite a person's touch...my attraction and description is somehow a combination of the sense of touch and sight.”

Craftsman design is a style that expresses our mission as we look toward the future.

It emphasizes the quality of materials and workmanship, where decorative elements are complementary rather than distractions or ends in themselves. Shapes are fairly simple. Decorative themes in a room or a building are often variations of a single shape or object. **Structure becomes sculpture**. Craftsman design is seen particularly in the details.

In this regard it is an especially appropriate style for the construction and decoration of our church. God has made us **caretakers of his creation**. Bringing the best of the natural world into a place of worship honors the Creator, particularly through the Craftsman emphasis on wood, a renewable resource. We are likewise **caretakers of the talents** God has given us. Putting the best of our talents to work for a place of worship honors the Giver.

The integration of all the arts for a common look and feel in a Craftsman space reminds us that we are called to **live an organic life with integrity**, with our roots in Jesus Christ producing the fruits of an identifiable life lived in him. Simplicity in design with common themes in décor allows us to consider deeply the central values of our faith in Christ.

The fundamental human scale of Craftsman design reminds us that, though our relationship with God is never private, it is always personal and that each of us has value before God. We are created in God's image for a personal relationship with God and have such value that God in Christ died for us. The overall effect of Craftsman design **is to glorify God**, the Creator.

Please pray that our building might be the means by which we and generations to come by learn to live Paul's words to Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

¹ The arts and crafts movement... www.highbeam.com/doc/IGI-132739445.html

² arts and crafts www.infoplease.com/ce6/society/A0804893.html

³ Makinson, Randell L. and Heinz, Thomas A., Greene & Greene: Creating a Style, Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2004, p.7