The Fish Interfaith Center is home to the Wallace All Faiths Chapel and the Wilkinson Founders Chapel and the home for religious and spiritual life on campus. With a deep commitment to interfaith dialogue, the mission of the Fish Interfaith Center is to provide sacred space and inspire individuals as they shape their spiritual journey.
The Wallace All Faiths Chapel

The Fish Interfaith Center is dedicated to persons of all faiths, to pursue the spiritual journey while at Chapman University. This universal journey is reflected in the representation of four elements throughout the building: cosmos, light, nature and water. The Center, designed by principal architect David Martin of AC Martin Partners, was completed in 2004.

As you begin your tour, you face the main doors of the Center. On your right, the graceful Chapman Light Tower soars skyward, radiating softly like a glorious California sunset, immediately drawing your attention to the Fish Interfaith Center. Beckoned by a warm, lantern-like illumination from backlit marble, you begin a journey toward the main building: cosmos, light, nature and water. The walls of the tower, the building’s many windows glow with the rich colors of art glass, and a band of soft, white light encircles the top of the “floating roof” architecture.

At the base of the tower, you stop to read the story of Chapman University’s founding by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) founders – is a gracefully carved sculpture, artist William Tunberg’s beautiful Chancel Furnishings feature marquetry (inlaid wood) finishes echoing the celestial imagery of the sculpture—abstract shooting stars, crescents, and swirling galaxies. Because the furnishings are supported by lightweight steel frames that are nearly invisible to the eye, they give the illusion of floating.

The varying sources and colors of light profoundly impact your commune with the spiritual. During different hours of the day and seasons of the year, the sanctuary’s interior is bathed in constantly changing light of various hues as the sun traverses its heavenly arc, reflecting its brilliance through glass windows set high in the sanctuary’s massive walls. In each corner of the room, these free-standing walls are joined by Norie Sato’s intricately designed floor-to-ceiling Casewell-Parker “Dawn and Twilight” Windows composed of translucent panes overlaid with two layers of etched iridescent glass, creating an ever-changing variety of subtly-colored, patterned light.

A concealed hallway on the south side of the Fisher Faith Chapel provides access to restrooms and a tastefully-appointed Prayer and Meditation room. Equipped with a chancelite to facilitate conference meetings and abstractions before prayer, this room also doubles as a bridal preparation room. Three art glass windows flood the room with a deep purple light evoking a tranquil feeling. Continuing down the hallway you encounter the Vestry, a large room for the reverent storage of sacred symbols, vessels, vestments and other accoutrements of worship.

The vertical height of the tower contrasts with the horizontal pathway of the “Solar Star Score and Fountain.” Lisa Albuquerque’s three-part work of art begins at the tower, continues through the vestibule, and culminates in a sparkling fountain on the north side of the building 175 feet away. Following the labyrinth-like lines carved into the pavement, you walk through a wisteria-covered pergola, its intertwined vines heavy with clusters of luscious purple blossoms. Beneath your feet, the swishing blue lines flow together forming a musical score. The golden notes are actually a star chart, the Water Bear constellation; thus, heavily music lovers you into the Wallace All Faiths Chapel. Ahead, the lines of the score merge at the doorway, symbolizing distinct religious traditions working together for the common good. On your left, the gentle breeze rustling the tall grass of artist Susan Narduli’s gracefully sculpted Sacred Mound Garden in The Fashionables Courtyard whispers conversations shared among those who enter. The garden incorporates variegated grasses, small stones and large boulders, and specialized lighting fixtures tucked away in the earth.

Grasping the massive 500-pound doors by their braided rope bronze pulls, your spiritual journey continues, aided by the lengthy Moody Processional Vestibule and its striking strip of water-blue tile. Drawn toward the beautiful Skaggs Solar Fountain visible through the vestibule’s glass wall, you become aware of a subtle shift in the directional source of light. Near the doors, light enters the corridor from low, side windows. As your journey continues toward the glistening solar disk, light enters the hallway at a higher angle from strategically-placed windows high in the walls. The worshiper’s spirit experiences a corresponding elevation. Suddenly on the left, three angular openings in a massive wall reveal the Yoder Sanctuary, and beneath your feet you discover quotations reflecting on themes of water, the heavens, music, and the interconnectedness of all life with the divine.

Entering the expansive sanctuary of the Wallace All Faiths Chapel, your senses are heightened by the unexpected sweep of curved walls ending in a lofty, four-story-high ceiling. The room’s focal point, Chapman artist Richard Turner’s magnificent Makarechian-Pralle-Case “Equinox Sunrise” sculpture of the setting moon and the rising sun, floats effortlessly from its suspension beneath a skylight high above the altar. Constructed of lightweight golden-bronze metal, the sculpture measures 30 by 15 feet. Nature’s light entering from the skylight and art glass windows interweaves with the interior lighting to play upon the sculpture’s metallic surface, subtly altering its appearance. Kent Kahlen’s star-like pendant light fixtures of blowned glass frame the sculpture. On the dias beneath the sculpture, artist William Tunberg’s beautiful Chancel Furnishings feature marquetry (inlaid wood) finishes echoing the celestial imagery of the sculpture—abstract shooting stars, crescents, and swirling galaxies.

Approaching the Fish Interfaith Center from the northeast, or exiting the Wallace All Faiths Chapel or Vestibule in the northeast corner, you find a gate opening onto the lush Deed’s Garden of the Senses, designed by Susan Narduli. The sight and sound of Lita Albuquerque’s Skaggs Solar Fountain captures your attention, luring you to enter this tranquil enclave and refresh your spirit. Sunlight plays on the fountain’s large golden solar disk, as water pours through the copper wall by means of small jets arranged in the pattern of the Water Bearer constellation. Captivated, you pause to rest on one of the white onyx benches that glow softly at night, echoed by matching onyx shards on the wall. The sound of falling water, the feel of smooth stone surface, the aroma of blooming flowers, and the sight of beautiful foliage lead you to reflect on divine beauty revealed in nature.

Refreshed, you rise from the bench and enter the Wilkinson Founders Chapel. The focal point of this beautifully intimate sacred space – dedicated to the memory of Chapman’s Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) founders – is a gracefully curved glass screen, in front of which stand William Tunberg’s handcrafted solid maple Chancel Furnishings with beautiful marquetry (inlaid wood) features such as chalices, intertwining vines and an impressive standard with interchangeable symbols, including a crescent moon and star, a cross and the star of David. Soothing heavenly light bathes the room through a circular skylight above the altar and three rice-paper art glass windows.

Reentering the garden, you are drawn toward an opening in the garden wall through which stone of an unusual shade is visible. Created out of Brazilian marble the color of the Southern California sky, Susan Narduli’s gracefully sculpted Albuquerques three-part work of art.

Chapman University is a private, coeducational liberal arts university located in Orange County, California. The University is affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through the extraordinary Chapman University’s founding by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) founders. The University is home to more than 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students, offering more than 150 academic programs across 11 schools and colleges. Chapman is recognized for its innovative and collaborative programs, including the Fowler College of Business, the The Wallis Annenberg College of Fine Arts, Communication and Humanities, the Musco Center for the Arts, the Esri Center for Geographic Information Sciences and Technology, and the Scripps Howard National Journalism Center.