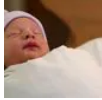


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BREAKING NEWS

Steeple at century-old East Side church collapses in extra-alarm blaze, fire officials say

By **Deanese Williams-Harris** and **Ilana Arougheti**
Chicago Tribune • Last Updated: Oct 14, 2023 at 10:40 am



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Chicago Fire Department firefighters work the scene of a three alarm fire at Advocate United Church of Christ in Chicago's East Side neighborhood on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. (Trent Sprague/Chicago Tribune)

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The steeple of a century-old church collapsed Saturday morning during an extra-alarm blaze in the East Side neighborhood on the Far South Side, fire officials said.

The blaze broke out at about 4 a.m. at Advocate United Church of Christ, a 3 1/2 story church with a truss roof at 10259 S. Avenue L. A 2-11 alarm was initially called but later upgraded to a 3-11 alarm when a steeple on the side of the structure fell, fire officials said.

About 100 firefighters attacked the blaze and CTA warming buses were called to the scene when officials requested the evacuation of residents from adjacent homes, officials said.

Chicago Fire Department firefighters work the scene of a three alarm fire at Advocate United Church of Christ in Chicago's East Side neighborhood on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. (Trent Sprague/Chicago Tribune)

The extra-alarm was struck down shortly before 8 a.m.

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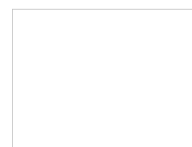
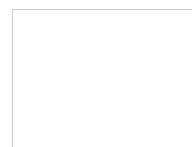
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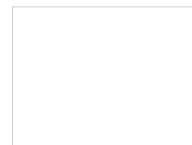
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No injuries were reported at the scene, and the cause of the blaze was under investigation.

The historic building was home to the Advocate United Church of Christ since 2013, From 1922 until 2013, St. Petri United Church of Christ held worship services there.



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St. Petri was founded in 1885 before moving to the historic building on South Avenue L in 1922, former St. Petri pastor Bob Hempel wrote on Facebook on Saturday.

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“I was sad to see the building burn, especially seeing the iconic steeple collapse,”

Hempel wrote. "You could see the steeple driving on the Chicago Skyway."

The Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ also offered condolences to the Advocate congregation Saturday.

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