

# Chicago Church Mourns After Falling Gargoyle Kills Mother of 2

A historic Chicago church apologized on Friday, a day after pieces of a gargoyle fell off the building's facade and killed a mother-of-two who was walking along the street.

Sara Bean, 34, was killed on Thursday while walking to lunch with her fiancé, who is her longtime boyfriend and father of her children, local media reported.

The Second Presbyterian Church in the South Loop neighborhood just outside downtown Chicago expressed its sympathy to Bean's family in a statement on Friday and said it was "deeply sorry at the death."

The church, which does not have outstanding complaints over its structure but has had violations in the past, was putting up protective scaffolding on Friday to prevent any more accidents.

"It's going up as we speak," said Denise Conway, interim office administrator at the church, one of the city's oldest and a national historic landmark. The church will remain open despite the accident, she added.

According to the Chicago Department of Buildings, a metal decorative piece on the exterior of the building gave away on Thursday and dislodged part of a gargoyle on the steeple and the broken piece fell and struck Bean, who worked at Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago.

The city said that the church building failed an inspection in 2011, including violations such as failure to maintain exterior walls. The case was dismissed after repairs were

made, it said.

The church was built in 1873, two years after the Great Chicago Fire. According to its website, it created a nonprofit organization in 2006 to oversee preservation of its historic facade and interior architecture, seeking funds for improvements such as new boilers and windows.

It was designated a historic landmark last year.

---

*Editing by Fiona Ortiz and Susan Heavey*

© 2014 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.