

Historic Michigan Church Building Ravaged by Massive Overnight Fire

A massive fire ripped through a historic church building in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wednesday night, sending flames through the roof and leaving behind devastating destruction—but sparing the neighboring sanctuary.

Firefighters rushed to the property owned by LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church around 11 p.m., according to WZZM 13. Crews were met with heavy flames and thick smoke as the fire rapidly consumed the building, forcing firefighters into an hours-long fight to bring the inferno under control.

Despite initial reports describing the incident as a fire at LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church, the congregation's main sanctuary was not the building engulfed in flames.

Instead, the fire tore through a former Seventh-day Adventist church next door that LaGrave owns. The congregation assured the community that its primary church building was not in danger as firefighters worked to keep the flames from spreading.

The situation, however, became increasingly dangerous.

According to WWMT, firefighters initially battled the flames from inside the building for approximately two hours. As conditions deteriorated, crews were forced to retreat. The floor eventually collapsed, prompting firefighters to transition to a defensive operation.



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Nineteen fire crews responded to the scene, WWMT reported, and officials estimated the blaze was approximately 90% contained by 6 a.m. Thursday.

One firefighter was struck in the head by a falling brick and injured during the response but is expected to recover, according to WWMT. The 133-year-old building is expected to be a total loss.

But this wasn't simply an empty building waiting for its fate.

Pastor Peter M. Jonker told WWMT that LaGrave had been preparing to breathe new life into the property by transforming it into a community respite center for those dealing with a housing crisis. Plans had been drawn, resources invested, and the vision was moving forward.

Now, those plans have been met with heartbreaking devastation.

Yet amid the destruction, there is also reason for gratitude: No lives were lost, the injured firefighter is expected to recover, and LaGrave's main sanctuary was spared.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation as the congregation determines what comes next.

For believers watching from afar, this is a moment to pray—for the firefighter who was injured, for LaGrave's leaders and for a ministry vision intended to bring hope to some of the city's most vulnerable.

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