

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



City of Duluth - Fire Department

602 West Second Street • Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-730-4400 • www.duluthmn.gov

*For more information contact Kate Van Daele,
Public Information Officer at 218-730-5309*

DATE: 8/28/2021

SUBJECT: Duluth Church struck by lightning, damage estimated at \$185,000

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Lightning strike

CASE NO.: 21-9577

INCIDENT DATE: 8/28/2021

INCIDENT TIME: 7:45p.m.

INCIDENT LOCATION: 417 North 3rd Avenue

Duluth Church struck by lightning, damage estimated at \$185,000

[Duluth, MN] At approximately 7:45 p.m., the Duluth Fire Department was dispatched to Hope City Church located at 417 North 3rd Avenue East. The report initially came in as a structure fire after a recording party said that the church had been struck by lightning. On arrival, crews found a large amount of debris in the street in front of the church on East 5th Street. Crews did not see any smoke; however, the western steeple that was hit was severely damaged and has been reduced to its frame.

Crews conducted a primary search in the church and found no fire or smoke within the building. Additional crews found considerable roof damage during a secondary search that has impacted the structural intent of the building.

While crews were searching the building, the Duluth Police Department noticed a large amount of water coming down North 3rd Avenue East. Upon further review, a water main had broken from the impacts of the direct lightning strike to the church. City of Duluth Utility Operations crews are in the process of shutting down a portion of North East Third Street between East 5th and East 4th Street to repair the break.

Due to the amount of debris and the building's structural concerns, City of Duluth Public Works crews will be closing East 5th Street between North 3rd Avenue East and North 2nd Avenue East to vehicular traffic. It is expected that once the water main break on East 3rd Street has been repaired, that North 3rd Street between East 5th Street and East 4th Street will also be closed to vehicular traffic until further notice.

"The building will be uninhabitable until a structural engineer can determine if any part of the building can be used and what the plan will be to repair it," said Wendy Rannenberg, City of Duluth Building Official.

Fire officials estimate damages to be valued at \$185,000.

"Upon arrival, debris was scattered," said Assistant Chief Clint Reff. "It looked like a bomb had exploded."

Crews from Headquarters, Lincoln Park, and UMD responded to the call. The Duluth Police Department helped with traffic and crowd control, and assisted in coordinating the needs of Public Works and Utility Operations crews, in addition to Minnesota Power, and Comfort Systems personnel. Minnesota Power and Comfort Systems were also called to the scene to shut off power to the building.

###