

Members of historic church destroyed by fire turn to task of rebuilding

[Mike Clark](#)

Updated Sep 21, 2021



The congregation of the historic St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Beecher, shown in this undated photo, is accepting donations after a fire destroyed the 19th century building.

BEECHER — Members of a historic church destroyed by fire over the weekend have been heartened by the outpouring of support for their efforts to rebuild, an official said.

"We've heard comments (like), 'I drive by the church in the morning, it gives me a sense of peace and helps me go on with my day,'" St. Paul's Lutheran Church treasurer Joan Karczewski said Tuesday.

The church, which was founded in 1865 and whose building dated back to the 1870s according to various reports, burned down on Sunday during an Oktoberfest celebration.

Dozens of fire departments, including several from Indiana, responded to the blaze. ABC7 Chicago reported one firefighter was taken to a hospital for treatment of heat exhaustion and three more were treated at the scene.

Karczewski said two funds have been set up to accept donations for rebuilding the church. One is at First Community Bank & Trust, which has branches in Beecher and Peotone; checks may be dropped off at either location.

Lutheran Church Charities also has an option to donate online at: <https://www.lutheranchurchcharities.org/ministries-in-need.html>.

"We don't like asking for donations, but comments we see and hear (say), 'What can we do to help?'" Karczewski said.

Even with donations coming in, St. Paul's members are coming to terms with the realization that some elements of the church are irreplaceable.

"Our mural and our organ, you can't put a price on those," Karczewski said. "The mural came over from Germany."

###