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# Fire Destroys 120-Year-Old Minnesota Synagogue, Torah Scrolls Saved

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**Updated 4:30 p.m.**

A synagogue in northern Minnesota went up in flames on Monday.

Adas Israel Congregation, an Orthodox synagogue in Duluth, Minnesota, was ablaze as of 2:22 Monday morning, the Duluth Fire Department said in a statement. Much of the building has been destroyed and the fire department is working to stabilize the structure to prevent further damage.

A preliminary investigation did not find any evidence of accelerants, but the Duluth Police Department had interviewed persons of interest who were near the synagogue building around the time of the fire, police chief Mike Tusken said in a press conference on Monday afternoon.

“We will turn every stone on this investigation to figure out what happened,” Tusken said. Two experts from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives arrived to assist in the investigation, which Tusken said was protocol whenever a house of worship suffered from fire. He added that there were no records of threats against the synagogue.

The congregation dates back to the 1800s and the cornerstone of the building was laid in 1901, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas said in a statement.

Eight of the congregation’s Torah scrolls were stored in the basement and were unharmed, Fire Chief Shawn Krizaj said in a press conference.

The president of city’s other synagogue, the Reform/Reconstructionist congregation Temple Israel, has offered their building as a shared space for the High Holidays, which begin September 30.

“We’ve all know each other our whole lives,” Temple Israel president Rob Shamblott told the Duluth News-Tribune. “(They’re) heartbroken.”

According to the St. Paul Jewish Federation, the synagogue has 75 members and daily prayer services.

The Jewish federations of Minneapolis and St. Paul have organized an online fundraiser to support the congregation.

*JTA contributed reporting.*