

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

May 24, 2024

Fire contained at Holy Redeemer Church in Downtown Madison

MADISON, WI – Late Friday morning, May 24, 2024, authorities received reports of lightning striking the steeple of Holy Redeemer Church, located at 120 West Johnson Street in downtown Madison.

Responding to reports of a fire at the church, the Madison Fire Department arrived on the scene and successfully extinguished a fire in the upper part of the steeple. No injuries have been reported. Fire damage is limited to the upper portion of the steeple and some smoke damage occurred inside the building. However, the amount of water required to extinguish the fire resulted in water damage to the back third of the church and the need for significant cleanup. Recovery crews are already on site to start the water mitigation process.

“Thank you to all the kind individuals who immediately responded with prayers. We know they were effective,” said Rev. Drew Olson, Parochial Administrator of Our Lady of Guadalupe Pastorate, of which Holy Redeemer Church is a part. “We are also very grateful for the fire department’s quick response. We know that the Lord can bring good out of disasters like this.”

Bishop Donald J. Hying, bishop of the Diocese of Madison, said, “I offer my prayers, support, and solidarity to the parishioners of Our Lady of Guadalupe Pastorate and to Rev. Drew Olson. Holy Redeemer Church is a pillar of our diocese, a historic treasure for the city of Madison, and a powerful downtown presence for the Catholic Church and Eucharistic Adoration.” Recalling the fire at St. Raphael Cathedral 19 years ago, Bishop Hying continued, “Hearing of a church fire in downtown Madison brings back difficult memories for many of us. We give thanks to God that, in this instance, the fire was contained to the steeple. I am grateful that no one was injured and extend my deepest appreciation to the Madison Fire Department.”

A cleaner for the church reported that he and one other person were in the basement when lightning struck. They were able to exit without issue. The Blessed Sacrament has been safely removed from the church.

Masses, other liturgies, and all other activities will be moved for the time being until an assessment of needed repairs is completed and the safety of parishioners can be assured. Visit the Our Lady of Guadalupe Pastorate website, guadalupemadison.org, and Facebook page for updates.

For more information, please contact:

Marie Ethen
Director of Operations
(608) 257-5000
methen@stjamesschool.org

###