

# Prayer Service Scheduled For Thursday Night In St. Paul Episcopal Church Garden After Serious Fire

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ALTON - St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 10 East Third St in Alton has a special prayer service scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, June 25, in the garden in the wake of the serious fire that occurred on Tuesday.

Led by Alton firefighters and several other departments, the firefighters contained the blaze and smoke in the church and with cleanup will ultimately recover. The Alton firefighters were on scene quickly and immediately went into action. Other nearby departments joined them in the intense battle to control the fire and smoke at the church. Deputy Fire Chief Brad Sweetman and Alton Fire Chief Jesse Jemison directed the coordinated attack of the fire.

The Illinois State Fire Marshal was called to the scene to investigate along with the Alton Fire Department.

The church has been through a lot since it began in 1845.

"We've always come back stronger," said the Rev. Cynthia Sever, rector.

Sever said the fire, which started sometime Tuesday morning, was confined to the office, library, bathrooms and the rooms above in the church. The outside structure was basically undamaged as were the sanctuary and church hall.

Fire officials told the rector the thick windows of the office and the stone walls kept the fire from spreading further, as did the courageous work of firefighters from several area departments. The insurance company recommended a cleanup company, which has already been on site.

Sunday services will be held in the garden at 10 a.m. until further notice.