

Arson suspected in Manitoba church fire on Easter

Just hours after Easter Sunday Mass, residents of St. Theresa Point First Nation in Manitoba could only watch and cry as their Catholic church burned to the ground.

Arson is suspected and a 32-year-old man who was seen exiting the church has been arrested.

"It was really devastating. This church has been good to us over the years," Chief Marie Wood told CBC News. "It's Easter and (people are) supposed to be happy.... Right now, it's kind of sombre."

The church, about 65 years old, was the only one in the community of 5,000, located about 460 kilometres north of Winnipeg.

No one was injured in the fire, which was first reported to Island Lake RCMP about 2:50 p.m.

"If you want to go back in history about it, this church came from our elders that said we'd like to have this community of Roman Catholics," Bernard Wood, who works for the St. Theresa Point ministry, told the *Winnipeg Free Press*. "Thinking about that, where do we go in terms of the church now? Where are we going to go?"

Marie Wood said about \$150,000 had been raised to make repairs to the church in the past several years. That effort will now be turned into a re-building fund, she said.