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UNIQUE WOODEN CHURCH NEAR OPTINA BURNS TO THE GROUND



A true tragedy occurred over the weekend as a uniquely beautiful wooden church in the Kaluga Province of Russia, near the famous Optina Pustyn Monastery, burned to the ground.

The tragedy at the Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in the village of Podborki occurred in the morning of Sunday, February 23, reports Pravoslavie.ru.

The wooden church was built in the 1990s on the site of an ancient stone church that was blown up during WW2. Its beauty amazed all who saw it. Two years ago, [Fr. Dimitry Torshin](#), whose articles have been published on OrthoChristian, was appointed as rector of the renowned church.

According to the locals, with the arrival of Fr. Dmitry, the village began to be transformed both externally and spiritually. In addition to putting the church in order, he began to build another church below the wooden one and beautified the area. He also built a font in honor of St. Luke of Crimea.



The Byzantine-style font is all that remains of the church complex after the fire.

“I had a premonition that a tragedy would happen,” says Fr. Dimitry. “I even went to the church an hour before the fire, prayed, checked everything, crossed every corner. But when I realized that everything was in order with the church, I returned home.”

Fr. Dimitry was later awoken by a call from firefighters letting him know they were on the way. They had been called by local residents who noticed the fire.



The fire was most likely due to faulty wiring, perhaps caused by mice chewing through the wires.

Fr. Dmitry and his parishioners served a moleben of thanksgiving on the smoldering ashes later in the morning. "Everything the Lord does is for the best. I think the tragedy will serve to further activate parish life," Fr. Dmitry said.

Parishioners are hopeful that they will find the church's miraculous Kazan Icon of the Mother of God amidst the rubble.

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