

Fire at St Paul's RC Church in Muirhouse believed deliberate



Police are appealing for witnesses following a suspicious fire at Paul's RC Church, Muirhouse Avenue.

The incident was reported to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service at around 9.20pm yesterday (Sunday, November 30). The fire has caused substantial damage to the building and is believed to be deliberate.

Police are eager to trace a number of youths in connection with this incident, who are believed to have been loitering near the building less than an hour before the fire started.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service attended and the fire was brought under control just after midnight. Fortunately the building had been vacant since its closure in October, which meant there were no casualties.

Pennywell Road and Muirhouse Avenue were temporarily closed but have now reopened. A part of the pavement on Muirhouse Avenue is still cordoned off and this will remain in place until the safety of the building has been assessed.

Inspector Alan Carson said: "This was an appalling attack on a religious building which, despite its closure, was still of importance to the local community in Muirhouse. It was a reckless act which could well have resulted in serious injury or worse.

"We are eager to talk to anyone who may have witnessed anything suspicious around the church on Sunday night.

"We are particularly keen to trace a group of youths who were seen near the church less than an hour before the fire was reported. Tracing these young people would significantly help us with our enquiries.

"Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact Police Scotland immediately on 101 or through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."