

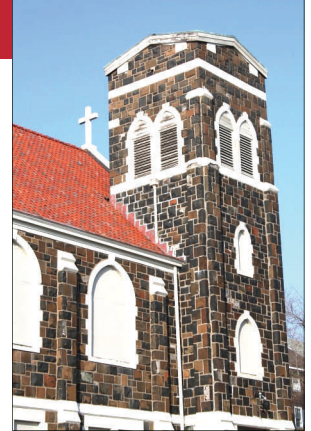
Sites Worth Saving

MINNESOTA'S 10 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES 2011



Preservation Alliance of Minnesota ❖ www.mnpreservation.org

St. Peter's Church, once the cornerstone of the Italian-American community in Duluth, was constructed in the mid-1920s to serve that city's large Italian-American community. Peter Summers, the son of Duluth's first Italian immigrant, is credited with the structure's design. The building's striking variegated stone exterior was the work of Italian-American stone masons from the church's original congregation. Using hand-cut stone harvested from Duluth's Twin Ponds area, the masons often worked for little or no pay to complete this community landmark.



The sanctuary's stained-glass windows were commissioned from 1927 to 1931 and purchased by parishioners as memorials. The church bell, relocated from the congregation's original wood structure, is still housed in the building's east tower. A stone grotto at the rear of the property was constructed to honor World War II veterans, but is now severely overgrown. The sanctuary's polychromatic interior includes exposed trusses with decorative painting and plaster, and a gilded niche behind the altar.

The future of this historic structure is now uncertain. In response to a dwindling congregation and a growing list of needed repairs, the Diocese of Duluth elected to close the church in late 2010. Despite a purchase offer by the grandson of the original architect, the diocese is interested in selling the property for development. While St. Peter's Church needs some repairs, particularly to the roofing and flashing, it is believed to be in fair condition and is an excellent candidate for reuse. Among the ideas suggested by local community members are an Italian cultural and learning center, a permanent headquarters for Duluth's Italian American Club, or even a nondenominational church.

Action Steps

1. The Duluth Preservation Alliance (DPA) and other community members are working to persuade the Diocese to permit a reuse study. Contact the DPA to assist with these efforts.
2. Contact the Diocese of Duluth to encourage partnership with local community groups and to convey your support for the building's preservation.
3. Help form a coalition of support to raise funds for purchasing the building and pursuing reuse options by the Duluth Italian-American club and other potential partner organizations.

DULUTH



ST. PETER'S CHURCH

