

FREDERICK DOUGLASS' CHURCH ENDANGERED

When chunks of plaster began falling from the ceiling of the national cathedral of African Methodism last year, one of Washington's oldest Black congregations nearly had to abandon its sanctuary.

Instead, the people of Metropolitan A.M.E. Church — where member Frederick Douglass gave his last speech in 1894 and where a pew bears his name — have begun emergency repairs. They brought in scaffolding to block falling debris, and now they worship under yellow construction lights.

The church that also hosted Rosa Parks' funeral was among the sites named America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places because it needs \$11 million in critical but unaffordable repairs.

Metropolitan A.M.E., an 1886 red brick Victorian Gothic-style church, deteriorated over time. Once among the largest integrated meeting halls in the segregated nation's capital, it suffered cracks and water damage as its residential neighborhood a few blocks from the White House was swallowed by downtown development.

Among the most endangered sites on the 2010 list is one of the last surviving Negro League ballparks, Hinchliffe Stadium in Paterson, N.J., The 10,000-seat Art Deco stadium was home to the New York Black Yankees.

— Associated Press