News 22 November 2026 | English article

1,000 Churches at Risk in England: 69 Added to Heritage at Risk Register in 2026

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"A total of 1,038 places of worship in England now sit on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, after 69 were added in 2026 and only 12 were taken off"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

A total of 1,038 places of worship in England now sit on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, after 69 were added in 2026 and only 12 were taken off. The figures come from an analysis by the National Churches Trust, published on 18 November 2026, and they paint the bleakest picture yet for the country's historic churches. Places of worship are now deteriorating faster than any other kind of historic building in England.

Picture a village church that has stood for 800 years, its tower patched with scaffolding, its roof leaking every winter, its congregation too small to pay for the repairs. Now multiply that picture by more than a thousand. That is what the register is really counting: not just old stone, but the places where generations were baptised, married, and buried, quietly slipping toward the point of no return.

The numbers behind the headline are stark. Places of worship on the register rose by 5.4% In the past year, while the register as a whole rose by only 2%. Since 2022 the total has climbed 13.4%, From 915 to 1,038. Churches are not just joining the list - they are joining it faster every year, and far fewer are leaving it than arriving.

The breakdown shows where the pain is concentrated. Of the 1,038 places of worship at risk, 923 are Anglican, belonging to the Church of England. Forty-five are Catholic, 12 are Methodist, and 11 are Baptist, with the rest spread across other denominations. The Church of England carries the heaviest load, because it also carries the largest number of old, listed buildings, many of them in villages where the congregation has shrunk to a handful.

Heritage At Risk Register 2026: Where The New Churches Were Added

The Midlands added the most churches to the register in 2026, with 20 new entries, followed by the East of England with 17 and the South East with 10. Those three regions alone account for 47 of the 69 additions. Behind each entry is a familiar story: a leaking roof, crumbling stonework, a repair bill that runs into six figures, and a parish that cannot raise it.

What makes the register so worrying is the gap between arrivals and departures. Sixty-nine churches joined the list in 2026, but only 12 came off it. A church leaves the register when its repairs are done and its future is secure, so the low number of removals tells its own story. Far more churches are falling into danger than are being rescued from it.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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