

Colorado Church Lambasted for 'Refusing' Lesbian's Kissing Slideshow

Family and friends of a deceased lesbian woman complained on social media on Wednesday over what they said was a Colorado church's refusal to allow a slideshow during Vanessa Collier's funeral depicting images of her kissing her fiancée.

As a result, the weekend service for Vanessa Collier was abruptly moved across the street from a church in the Denver suburb of Lakewood to a smaller chapel at a funeral home, her loved ones said.

Collier, 33, died last month from a gunshot wound in the city of Thornton, north of Denver. Police spokesman Matt Barnes said the death is being investigated as a possible suicide.

In their posts, Collier's family and friends said that Ray Chavez, pastor of New Hope Ministries, forced the cancellation of the service last weekend at his church 15 minutes before it was set to start.

Chavez could not immediately be reached for comment, and the Denver Post and other local media also reported that they could not reach him.

"He refused to allow her alternative lifestyle video of her life be shown and kicked us out of the church," a posting on a Facebook page dedicated to Collier said. "Her casket was open, flowers laid out and hundreds of people sitting in the pews."

The supporters demonstrated outside the church on Tuesday, demanding the church accord Collier "respect and dignity" in death, according to the posting.