

DC Pastor Falls Dead Moments Before Sunday Service

The pastor of a D.C. church died minutes before his Sunday sermon, *The Washington Post* reports.

Church members found the Rev. Michael C. Murphy of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ unconscious in his office on Dec. 28, after he failed to appear in the pulpit for his early service.

"It is a difficult time for the church, but Peoples has been here for 124 years, and we will press on. We have got this because God has got us," senior associate minister of Peoples Rev. Leslie Dowdell-Cannon told *The Washington Post*.

Murphy was senior pastor at Peoples since 2008, where he came on board after 21 years at a church in Michigan, according to the church website. Murphy was passionate about social justice and human rights issues.

"He worked hard to get his message across," Barbara Mason, a longtime friend of Murphy, told the *Lansing State Journal*. "He was very active in civil rights. He just cared about people. He called himself a pastor-preacher. He preached the Word, but he lived it, in essence."

Another friend, Tony Baltimore, spoke highly of Murphy to the *Journal*.

"Mike was truly one of those who left a lasting imprint on the community and myself. He was a preacher who was an activist, a community leader who knew how to work with people of all political persuasions and backgrounds, and I think he did well in that."

Peoples is a progressive church outside the Petworth

neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

Please pray for this congregation.