

Isaac Hunter Died in Apparent Suicide, Reports Say

Isaac Hunter, former pastor of Summit Church in Orlando, Fla., died Tuesday. Though the details of his death remain unclear, the *Orlando Sentinel* reports his death was an apparent suicide.

“The body is at the Volusia County Medical Examiner’s office,” Dave Byron, community information director for the Volusia County Medical Examiner’s office—which works with Seminole County—told Charisma News. “They are going to do an autopsy this morning.”

Byron says information cannot be released publicly until the investigation is complete.

“Standard procedure is to send out a toxicology test,” he explains. “Until tests are returned and they’re integrated into the final report, the autopsy is not complete. It’s probably going to be several weeks before the official autopsy is complete.”

The Altamonte Springs Police Department would not give out any information, but the *Sentinel* reports that Hunter, the son of Northland Church Senior Pastor Joel Hunter, committed suicide, according to an email sent to members of Summit Church Tuesday.

“We found out today that Isaac took his life,” says the email sent by Darling Murray, a coordinator at Summit Church. “We are obviously deeply deeply devastated and saddened beyond words by this news. The tears keep coming and coming as we mourn. We are praying for his family and this congregation as we walk through this together.”

Pastor Jeff Kern wrote in a blog posted on Summit’s website

and Facebook page Tuesday:

"By now you may have heard that our former Senior Pastor, Isaac Hunter, died today. As I write these words, it is hard to express the deep sorrow we as a staff team are feeling for this tragic loss.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Rhonda, their three children, and their extended family. We love them and it is our desire to support them in any way we can during this difficult time.

"As we look back on Isaac's ministry here at Summit, we are profoundly grateful for the impact he had in all of our lives. We know that Isaac is deeply loved by Jesus, even in a time of brokenness, and are assured of his continuing relationship with Christ, now in heaven (Romans 8:38-39).

"I know we all want to reach out to the Hunter family, but the way we can best love them at this time is to pray for them and respect their privacy. Right now, would you please take a moment and pray for them?

"We will have opportunities in the near future to fully express our love and sympathies. Memorial service information will also be posted on this blog as soon as it is available."

Hunter founded Summit Church in 2002. It has since become one of the fastest-growing churches in Central Florida, with five locations and an estimated 5,000 worshippers. The church grew out of a ministry the younger Hunter started at his father's megachurch.

Hunter made headlines last year when he resigned after admitting to an affair with a former staffer.

According to court documents from 2012, his family also found an undated suicide note on his computer with instructions to Summit Church on what should be done "If I die," written

before his 35th birthday on April 26, 2012.

"I would very much like to be remembered as a person who loved his children, his parents, his brothers, and his best friends—well, while I could," Hunter wrote. "I fear I will love them better in my absence. As I have become what I never wished to be, a burden on those I love the most."