

Megachurch Pastor's Cancer Diagnosis Draws Prayer Flood

A megachurch in Tennessee revealed Friday that its senior pastor has cancer, and it is calling on the Christian community to lift him and his family up in prayer.

David Landrith, of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, was diagnosed last week with a rare and aggressive form of cancer known as colorectal melanoma. Still in stage one, there is no evidence that the cancer has spread.

"On Thursday, Feb. 28, David had a colonoscopy after a previous exam revealed some abnormalities," the church's executive team wrote in an online letter. "The next day he had outpatient surgery to remove the spot that had concerned his doctor. Tests were ordered and on Tuesday, March 5, the results of a biopsy revealed the cancer. Additional tests were conducted the next day and the full extent of his condition was revealed at a consultation on Thursday, March 7. David is pursuing all available treatment options.

"This news has certainly come as a shock to us all," the letter continues, "but we can trust that David is in God's hands as he's always been. He believes what he preaches and has a strong faith. He wants us to be encouraged in our faith during this time as well."

In a separate statement, long-time friend and Executive Pastor Lance Taylor said, "For years, David has led us to trust God in every circumstance. The way he is handling the news has already proven to be inspiring. I know God will use him to teach us about faithfulness. David wants nothing but God's glory to be made known through whatever happens."

As news about Landrith's diagnosis spread, many Christian leaders publicly expressed prayers for the 49-year-old pastor.

Pray for pastor @davidlandrith, diagnosed [with] a rare and aggressive cancer," tweeted Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. "Love you, my friend."

"Please join me in praying for @davidlandrith," pastor and author David Platt tweeted. "Love you bro."

Bible preacher James MacDonald, pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel in Chicago, also asked for prayers: "Please join me in praying for my good friend Pastor @davidlandrith. (love this man)."

Long Hollow Baptist also received hundreds of comments on the announcement on its Facebook page.

"Praying for Gods complete healing of your cancer Brother David," Sandra Garrett wrote. "It is your true love for God and enthusiastic messages that brought me back to church to stay. I look forward to all your future messages about our gracious Lord of miracles!"

Terri Lamb Benson posted: "Prayers for healing! I pray that God will provide the doctors guidance in your treatment and he will guide and strengthen you and your family as well. Our family will be praying continuously for all of you."

Long Hollow Baptist has set up a special page dedicated to the Landriths, aiming to have round-the-clock prayer for the family. As of press time, nearly 400 people have committed to pray via the site.

"Please pray for healing and comfort, and that he and his family will experience peace during this time," the Web page says. "Also pray that God will reveal His purpose and plan for all of us during this trial. There will be several corporate prayer opportunities for David and his family in the near future."

Landrith and his wife, Jennifer, have three children. The pastor, who is said to be in good spirits and full of faith,

has been serving at Long Hollow Baptist Church since 1997; he is the congregation's third senior pastor since its founding in 1977.

An active Twitter user, Landrith has posted several thanks on his account.

Shortly after the church's announcement, he tweeted: "@JenLandrith and I have been so encouraged today by your prayers and words of encouragement! Thank you so much! (Is 26:3-4)."

"We are so thankful for the prayers and encouragement of our @longhollow church family today," he wrote Sunday evening. "You guys are so good to us!"

Long Hollow Baptist Church, home to more than 9,000 members, meets weekly in five locations in and around Nashville, Tenn.

Click below to watch Landrith deliver a special message to the Hendersonville campus during its 11:45 a.m. service on Sunday.