

Shooting of Louisiana Pastor Followed Rape Allegation, Police Say

A pastor shot to death last week at his church in Lake Charles, La., was accused of rape just days before by the wife of the man who was charged with his killing, authorities said on Monday.

Ronald Harris Sr. was shot as he preached to about 50 to 60 people at a service on Friday evening at the Tabernacle of Praise Worship Center, according to the Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office.

Woodrow Karey, 53, of Lake Charles is being held on a second degree murder charge in connection with the pastor's death.

On Wednesday, Karey's wife filed a rape complaint against Harris, according to a statement released on Monday by the sheriff's office.

Investigators are looking into the "possibility of a relationship" between Harris and the wife of Karey and whether that may have prompted the shooting, according to the sheriff's office.

Karey found text messages on his wife's cellphone between her and Harris, the sheriff's office said in a statement.

Authorities said they are trying to determine whether Harris and Karey's wife had any consensual or non-consensual sexual relationship.

A member of Harris's family could not be reached for comment on Monday and calls to the Tabernacle of Praise Worship Center went unanswered.

Karey walked into the church, shot Harris with a shotgun as he was preaching and then fired at him again at close range when the pastor fell to the ground, said Kim Myers, a spokeswoman for the sheriff's office. Karey called authorities minutes later to arrange his surrender, she said.

Karey has no known criminal record, Myers said. He remains in jail on a \$1 million bond, she said.

Reporting by Kevin Murphy in Kansas City, Missouri; Editing by Alex Dobuzinskis and Ken Wills

© 2013 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.