

Texas Megachurch Co-Pastor Loses Cancer Battle

The co-pastor of a Texas megachurch died this week after a long battle with cancer.

Pastor Rochelle Nieman, 62, of Abundant Living Faith Center in El Paso, Texas, passed away Sunday after a lengthy illness from cancer. Her husband, Pastor Charles Nieman, posted a message about the tragedy on his Facebook page.

"It is with great sadness that we inform you that Pastor Rochelle passed away this morning surrounded by family," he wrote. "The Nieman family truly appreciates your love, support & prayers."

Rochelle Nieman directed the church's administration, led the women's ministry, acted as superintendent to Faith Christian Academy and regularly taught the congregation in the church's weekly services.

"Rochelle has a heart for making people feel at home and welcome," the church website states. "Her commitment to ministry is driven by her belief that every man and woman, and every child, regardless of circumstance, must know that there is a God who loves them unconditionally and wants them to live the life He has for them."

The Niemans began preaching at Abundant Living in 1977 to a small group of around 20 people. The congregation now consists of an estimated 23,000 parishioners in El Paso alone. Rochelle, who grew up in Raton, N.M., led Charles to the Lord. The couple married in 1970 and they have two children, Shannon and Jared.

Condolences have poured in for the Nieman family. Between the church's and Charles' Facebook pages, hundreds of people have

left comments.

Abundant Living's Facebook page quoted Jared Nieman saying, "I have always known that I had an incredible mother who had a great legacy. I can honestly admit today that I had no clue as to the depth & breadth of her impact on so many. Her legacy is far greater than I had ever imagined. I truly appreciate all of you who have posted your stories, memories & testimonies of how she affected you & your families' lives. I have laughed, smiled & cried reading them & have loved each & every one of them. Please remember always: God is Good & He is on your [sic] side!"

Diana Cedillo wrote on Charles Nieman's page: "Our deepest condolences to you Pastor as well as Jared and Shannon. Such a beautiful person has left us but has left a legacy behind her... May The Lord keep you strong. Our prayers are with you. Such sad news ... truly an idol in my eyes. We love you."

Casey Horn commented on Abundant Living's Facebook page: "What an amazing life Rochelle Nieman had. She led so many to Jesus and now it is her turn to be with Him forever. My thoughts and prayers are with the Nieman family she will be greatly missed."

Abundant Living will host a memorial service honoring Rochelle Nieman Friday at 7 p.m. The event will also be available via a live Internet stream.