

# Respected AG Pastor Karl Strader Dies at 91

Retired pastor Karl Strader, who began pastoring Lakeland First Assembly of God in 1966, died at 1 a.m. on Monday, March 30. He was 91 years old.

His family was at his bedside for many days, says his son Stephen Strader. Stephen says that several months ago, his father recorded multiple hours of singing his favorite hymns and reciting Scriptures.

First Assembly was renamed to Carpenter's Home Church in the 1980s, and Strader led the church for 20 years. Stephen told *Charisma* that he has fond memories of helping his father with their radio station on WLKF (originally WLAK).

"I literally was his engineer for that program, and then he turned the whole program over to me," Stephen says. "So for years I did it myself, live, Sunday mornings before church when I was 15 or 16 years old."

But WCIE was the most popular radio program that Karl founded. Later on, the church sold it to Moody Radio.

Carpenter's Home started Carpenter's Home Estates, which continued on after the megachurch building was torn down in 2015. Karl lived in those estates during his retirement.

"I hate to see the building torn down, but the building is not the church," Karl told *Charisma* in 2015 when the worship center was demolished. "The people are the church, and they are in about 12 different churches in Lakeland now. It's painful to see the building torn down, of course, but I'm not groveling on the ground because of it or putting ashes on my head. I just thank God for being involved in it for (nearly) 40 years."

Charisma Media founder and CEO Stephen Strang says he was a teenager at the church when Karl became its pastor in 1966.

“I saw the church grow during the heyday of the charismatic movement and Jesus movement,” Strang said. “Back in that era, it was one of the largest and most respected churches in the Assemblies of God.”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Straders will not be holding a public service at this time. In lieu of flowers, they will be setting up a “Karl Strader Trust” to help ministries.