

Tim Keller, retired megachurch pastor and bestselling author, dies at 72

by [Bob Smietana](#)

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Timothy Keller (Courtesy photo)

Tim Keller, an influential Presbyterian Church in America minister who founded a network of evangelical Christian churches in New York City, has died. He was 72.

Known for his brainy and winsome approach to evangelism, Keller founded Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan in 1989 and grew the congregation into a hub for a network of churches across the city. His books have sold more than 3 million copies.

Keller had been under treatment for pancreatic cancer after announcing in June 2020 that he had the disease. On May 18, Keller's son Michael posted a message

that his father had been released from the hospital and would receive hospice care at home.

After graduating from Gordon-Conwell Seminary, Keller spent five years as a pastor in the newly formed Presbyterian Church in America. He then spent five years teaching at Westminster Theological Seminary before moving to New York to plant Redeemer in Manhattan.

The church grew quickly to a group of 250, according to a history [posted](#) on its website. Unlike many urban churches, which drew crowds with rock bands, Redeemer became known for its traditional worship style and for Keller's sermons, which were meant to appeal to the mind as well as the heart. Redeemer eventually grew into a congregation of more than 5,000.

Keller also was a leading figure in the Neo-Reformed movement as one of the co-founders of The Gospel Coalition, a fellowship of evangelical churches in the Reformed tradition.

Author Jonathan Rauch became friends with Keller in recent years. Despite their differences—Rauch is Jewish, atheistic, and openly gay—Rauch said he never doubted his friend's love.

"Though he was a man of profound learning, he always expressed it with curiosity and humility," he said in an email. "Though he was devoted to the church and a builder of institutions, he never forgot that individuals come first. Tim's pastorate was universal, a gift to believers and unbelievers alike. When I hear the term 'Christlike,' I'll think of him." -Religion News Service