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Former Youth Minister Accused of Sexual Assault at Church

September 4, 2013 By [Pete Strom](#)

Man Who Worked as Youth Minister Accused of Sexual Assault Against Church Member



A man who formerly worked as the youth minister at the Cornerstone Community Church in Orangeburg has been accused of groping one of the women at the church, and will go to court on [sexual assault](#) charges. Reportedly, Hattler turned himself in on Monday, August 26th, after learning about a warrant for his arrest.

Patrick Hattler, 36, was at the Orangeburg County Municipal Court on Tuesday, facing first-degree assault and battery charges. However, this is not Hattler's first spot on his criminal record.

Lead investigator John Caddell reportedly told the court that Hattler had a long criminal history already, including several traffic and drug charges, and a charge of assault with intent to kill from 2001. Hattler pleaded guilty to the first assault charge and was sentenced to 7 years in prison, according to Richland County records.

The latest [sexual assault](#) charge led Orangeburg City Judge Barney Houser to set Hattler's bond at \$10,000, either cash or surety, and he ordered that Hattler have no direct or indirect contact with the sexual assault victim.

The victim's attorney also requested that the judge issue a no contact order from church members at Cornerstone as well, as the victim had been receiving too many phone calls from people at the church regarding the sexual assault.

The sexual assault incident, according to court documents, occurred on April 3rd. The victim, who asked not to be identified or to speak to the court, was beginning a job at the café in the Cornerstone Community Church. Hattler



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approached her to show her the café's operations, and when they were alone in a back room together, Hattler reportedly shoved the victim against a wall and began groping her. She pushed him away and asked him what he was doing, at which point he responded, "Let's pray" about the incident.

When he was arrested, Hattler stated that the incident "didn't happen like that."

The victim told church authorities first, and Hattler was immediately fired from his position at the church and banned from most of the events. However, the victim decided to go to police on Saturday, August 24th, because she had seen him attending church events again and felt unsafe. When she spoke to church authorities, they said they could not ban Hattler from public events, although he could not be a member of the church anymore.

The church did, the victim said, offer her counseling from within the church's membership, or outside of the church at the facility's expense.

The Strom Law Firm Can Help with Sexual Assault Charges

Assault and battery are two different but related crimes that frequently happen simultaneously and, as a result, are usually prosecuted jointly. Assault involves the act of threatening to injure someone, while battery refers to the actual act of violence. Both assault and battery are taken extremely seriously in a court of law and carry heavy penalties including jail time and more.

The experienced criminal defense attorneys at the Strom Law Firm, based in Columbia, SC, can defend against a variety of assault and battery charges, including:

- Assault
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- School fighting
- Disorderly conduct
- Resisting arrest
- Battery on a police officer
- Domestic violence
- Sexual assault

If you face assault and battery charges, including sexual assault, you are not automatically guilty. Contact the attorneys at the Strom Law Firm today for a free, confidential consultation to discuss the facts of your case. [803.252.4800](tel:803.252.4800).

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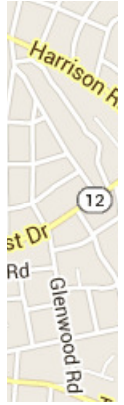
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