

Local

Former Youth Pastor Faces Indecency With A Child Charges

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Former youth pastor Joshua Douglas Earls is charged with two counts of Indecency with a Child by Contact. (credit: Garland Police Dept.)

GARLAND (CBSDFW.COM) – A former North Texas youth pastor has been accused of having an improper contact with a 16-year old girl.

Garland police arrested Joshua Earls earlier this week. Investigators confirmed that Earls, 28, had been the youth pastor at Arapaho Baptist Church for about four years. He resigned from the position in July of 2012. Garland police spokesman Officer Joe Ham said, "We don't know all the reasoning behind his resignation, but yes, we just recently found out about this case."

David Alvey, a spokesperson for Arapaho Road Baptist Church, says church leaders were shocked to learn about the allegations two weeks ago. He says the girl's family is devastated. "It's very painful, very painful. They're hurting. This was a sacred trust that was betrayed."

Police say the girl's parents discovered the problem when they found inappropriate pictures on her cell phone.

In an affidavit, police say during a bible study swim party last April or May, Earls was sitting next to the girl in a hot tub when he grabbed her hand and put it in his swim trunks.

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Detectives say the current accusations are part of an active investigation, but they worry other children, who were preyed on, have not come forward. "The church is in the process and has started this week in contacting and letting parents and youth know what has gone on," Harn explained. "Detectives do suspect that there are other victims."

As it stands, police believe any possible victims were all female and under the age of 17.

In addition to Joshua Earls, detectives are now calling his younger brother, Jordan Earls, a person of interest in the cases. Police say they have some questions for Jordan Earls, 24, about other possible inappropriate contact with children at Arapaho Baptist. Jordan Earls now lives in South Carolina, but when he resided in North Texas was listed as an adult volunteer at the church. Jordan Earls is currently in jail on unrelated charge.



Mugshot of Jordan Earls. (credit: Florence County, South Carolina Sheriff's Dept.)

Joshua Earls was charged with two counts of Indecency with a Child by Contact. He is free on \$100,000 bond.

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