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5 o'clock update

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Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2001

Petaluma pastor faces molest trial

A Sonoma County judge ruled yesterday that Rev. Dick Bruner, a Petaluma resident and former pastor at Christ Church North Bay in Novato, will stand trial for allegedly molesting a 13-year-old boy.

According to the alleged victim, now 16, Bruner molested him on three different occasions in 1998.

Two of the alleged incidents happened at a retreat near Occidental, the youth said, and the third took place at Bruner's home.

At a preliminary hearing held in Judge Elaine Watters' courtroom yesterday, the alleged victim said Bruner, 59, kissed him on the lips and rubbed his inner thigh in one incident. Another time Bruner, allegedly, asked the boy to sit on his lap while the pastor was wearing only a towel and kissed the boy again.

In a third incident at Bruner's home, the teenager said he was spending the night at Bruner's home while helping Bruner's son with some remodeling, then woke up suddenly to find the pastor touching his penis.

The case was investigated by the Petaluma Police Department.

Steve Gollmick of Christ Church North Bay said Bruner has not served as pastor of the church for over a year.

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