

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

May 22, 2009

Local Preacher Arrested for Sex Abuse

Sheriff Jimmy Harris states as follows:

On the afternoon of May 22, following a 5-month investigation, Billy Masters, 66, of Boaz (DeKalb County), was arrested and charged with 1st Degree Sexual Abuse.

An incident involving Masters, who was reportedly a preacher at Harvest Baptist Church in the Kilpatrick area, was reported to Sheriff's Investigator Mary Waters in January of this year. The victim in the incident was a male under the age of 12, who was a member of the church congregation.

Masters was convicted in 2001 for the sodomy of three male victims of similar age. He served time in prison and following his release in late 2007, he registered with the Sheriff's Office. Masters was up to date on his registration at the time of his arrest.

After receiving the report of abuse, an investigation was commenced by Mary Waters. A search of his residence took place approximately one month ago, during which his computer was seized. However, it appeared that the hard drive in the computer had recently been removed and a new drive installed.

A warrant was issued for Masters' arrest early this afternoon and he was arrested at his residence a short time later. He is in the DeKalb County Detention Center without bond at this time.

Masters will also face charges related to violating his parole from the earlier conviction.

