



Friday, September 02, 2011



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## Pastor charged with sexually abusing child

*Alleged incident took place in his Walkersville home*

by Margarita Raycheva, Staff Writer

Joe Nix Ivey, a 74-year-old Walkersville man and the senior pastor at Barnesville Baptist Church in Montgomery County, is facing child sex abuse charges in Frederick involving a girl from his congregation.

The girl's parents reported the alleged incident Monday to the Frederick County Sheriff's Office, two days after the girl told her mother about it.

According to court documents, the girl told her mother that Ivey sexually abused her in his Walkersville home in February 2010, when she was between 10 and 11 years old. The documents do not state a precise age of the girl.

On the day of the reported incident, the girl spent the night at Ivey's residence and was watching a movie with him in the morning when he locked the door and sexually abused her, according to court documents.

The girl told investigators that when Ivey finished, he said, "Don't tell anyone, it will ruin me," records state.

The girl told investigators that a similar thing happened when she was 6, court documents state.

After the girl gave her statement to police, they asked her and her parents for permission to listen in as the girl called Ivey. During the call, the girl asked Ivey if she should tell anyone what happened, to which he responded that it was between her, him and God, court documents state.

The girl asked Ivey if he had sexually abused any other children, and he said no, court documents state.

Investigators visited Ivey at his home Wednesday and told him about the allegations. At first, he denied everything and told investigators, "I am not a child molester," court documents state.

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But he later changed his story. When police asked if he sexually abused her, he replied, "Yes, a little bit."

When investigators asked Ivey about the girl's allegation of him abusing her when she was 6, he told them he couldn't remember. "I'm 74 years old. I don't remember that one," court documents state.

According to court records, Ivey signed a one-page statement, after which he "spoke of his regret and became tearful."

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Ivey was arrested, and signed an unsecured personal loan for \$85,000 that he will have to pay if he fails to appear in

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court. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for Sept. 28.

According to court documents, Ivey is being charged with sex abuse of a minor, second-degree sex offense and second-degree assault. He faces 55 years in jail.

Ivey did not return a call for comment Friday. Court records do not list a name of an attorney for him.

According to the Maryland Attorney General's Office, a second-degree sex offense is a sexual act by force or threat of force in which the victim is younger than 14 and the perpetrator is at least four years older.

Staff at the Barnesville Baptist Church did not return calls for comment.

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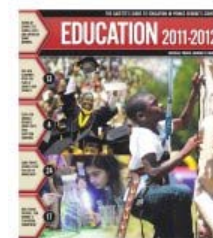
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