

VIRGINIA: Tri-Cities pastor charged in sex case released on \$100,000 bond

Written by Mark Bowes, Richmond Times-Dispatch
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A Tri-Cities pastor charged with sending sexually explicit text messages to a 15-year-old girl and then meeting her in Petersburg on Monday was released Friday from Riverside Regional Jail on \$100,000 bond.

The Rev. Curtis G. Mathews, 50, pastor of Springfield Baptist Church in Dinwiddie County for the past 15 years, was granted bail at a bond hearing Friday in Petersburg Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. He is charged with two felony counts of using a communication device to facilitate sex with a minor.

Mathews was arrested late Tuesday evening at his home in the 7700 block of Rolling Hill Road in Prince George County.

Investigators obtained search warrants for his home and his church, on Sutherland Road.

According to an affidavit for the warrant to search his home, a Petersburg police detective met Tuesday with the alleged victim, who advised that she had been having a conversation via Facebook with a person she believed to be a minor.

The detective wrote that he viewed numerous sexually explicit text messages the girl received from her male friend. The girl told the detective that she learned her Facebook friend was really an adult, identified as Mathews, when she met him in Petersburg on Monday, the affidavit said.

Based on an image sent to the girl's cellphone and other information, authorities determined Mathews' identity, the affidavit said.

Investigators on Tuesday seized computers, electronic storage devices and cellphones from Mathews' home, according to an inventory of items seized.

Mathews' next court appearance is March 26. A preliminary hearing in the case is set for April 19.

Springfield Baptist Church was organized in 1867 and is considered one of the oldest black churches in the South, according to the congregation's website.

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