



OFFICE OF
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Update

Church pastor arraigned on multiple sex offense charges

Port Orchard, Wash. -- The courtroom was unusually quiet as the charges were formally made public. Quiet whisperings from amongst visitors sitting in the courtroom were voluntarily silenced as Kitsap County Superior Court Judge Leila Mills read the multiple counts of the alleged crimes against Robbin Leeroy Harper, 60, the pastor of The Church in South Colby, and the suspect in an ever increasing number of alleged sex offenses against young, underage female victims.

Harper appeared before Judge Mills this past Tuesday for an initial hearing; however today's 3:00 p.m. appearance in superior court was the suspect's formal arraignment, or charging. All told, Harper was charged by the Kitsap County Prosecutor with one count of rape of a child, 1st degree; two counts of rape of a child, 2nd degree; three counts of child molestation, 1st degree, and two counts of child molestation, 2nd degree.

The charges involve five female victims, of varying ages, but all minors when the offenses were committed. Some of the victims are now adults. Offenses committed against three of the five victims resulted in multiple charges against Harper.

Sheriff's detectives have identified three additional victims of alleged sex abuse by Harper; charges against the defendant regarding these victims are being considered by the prosecutor's office.

The investigation into Harper's conduct with female members, or former members, of his church congregation began Oct. 20 with a call to 9-1-1 by the first victim. Sheriff's detectives took over the investigation on Oct. 22 and a public announcement of the investigation was disseminated Oct. 26. Harper voluntarily surrendered to detectives this past Monday, Oct. 29. Detectives are continuing their investigation as additional victims are coming forward.

Harper remains in custody with bail set at \$500,000. Should Harper post bail and bond, sexual assault protection orders have now been served on the defendant (as the respondent). The orders prohibit Harper from having any contact with the victims.

Harper's next scheduled court appearance is Nov. 29.

The investigation continues. Anyone with information about this investigation, or persons who feel that they were victimized by Harper, are urged to contact Det. Lori Blankenship at (360) 337-5615.

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Maximum penalties as stipulated under the Revised Code of Washington

Rape of a child, 1st degree: life imprisonment and / or a \$50,000 fine plus restitution and assessments.

Rape of a child, 2nd degree: life imprisonment and / or a \$50,000 fine plus restitution and assessments.

Child molestation, 1st degree: life imprisonment and / or a \$50,000 fine plus restitution and assessments.

Child molestation, 2nd degree: ten years imprisonment and / or a \$20,000 fine plus restitution and assessments.