

Former Magnolia youth minister admits to sexual indecency

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MAGNOLIA (BP)—A former Texas youth minister remained in jail May 18 after telling the Magnolia Police Department he sexually touched teenage boys while working in youth ministry at First Baptist Church of Magnolia.

Michael Anthony Romero, 51, was arrested May 12 on one count of sexual indecency with a child, a second-degree felony, Montgomery County Court records show.

The arrest occurred, according to court records accessed by KHOU.com, five months after Romero voluntarily approached the police department and told officers he touched teenage boys during youth group retreats, a Christian church camp and sleepovers at his lake house between 2002 and 2012.

He named five victims between the ages of 14 and 16, KHOU reported, and an investigation led to Romero's arrest on one count in connection with an event in 2004.

First Baptist Church of Magnolia, in a statement released to the congregation and media, described Romero as a former employee who worked from 2002 to 2012 but did not specify his position held.

"We have been devastated to learn that a former employee of our church (2002-2012), Mike (Taco) Romero, has recently confessed to inappropriate behavior with adolescents during his employment with the church," reads the statement signed by Executive Pastor Milt Eichler. "Immediately upon

hearing this from the Magnolia Police Department, we have fully cooperated with their investigation. Our hearts and prayers are with everyone involved.

“We continue to work with and cooperate with the authorities and encourage anyone with information to contact the Magnolia Police Department at (281) 356-2500.”

Romero worked with youth elsewhere in Texas and in Oklahoma after his tenure at First Baptist, said police, who expressed concern that other victims might exist.

If you are/have been a victim of sexual abuse or suspect sexual abuse by a pastor, staff member or member of a Southern Baptist church or entity, please reach out for help at (202) 864-5578 or SBChotline@guidepostsolutions.com. All calls are confidential.