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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Clergy and Faith Leader Initiative Child Sexual Assault Case Charged in Douglas County

Anyone with information on clergy or faith leader abuse is encouraged to report it at SupportSurvivors.widoj.gov or by calling 1-877-222-2620

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul and Douglas County District Attorney (DA) Mark Fruehauf today announced that Jeffrey Anthony Charles, age 61, has been charged with one count of Repeated Sexual Assault of a Child, Persistent Repeater, for incidents that occurred from 2005 to 2010.

“We are committed to holding perpetrators of sexual assault accountable,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “Thank you to DA Fruehauf for his continued partnership with the Clergy and Faith Leader Abuse Initiative, and for the work of his office and the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office in seeking justice in this case.”

According to the criminal complaint, Charles served as the pastor for Neighbors to Nations church in Princeton, Minn. at the time of the assaults and parishioners routinely traveled to Charles’ cabin in the Town of Summit, Wis. The complaint states that Charles sexually assaulted a victim three to four times at his cabin in the Town of Summit, Wis. over the course of five years, when the victim was between the ages of 3 and 7. Charles was previously convicted of Sexual Abuse, 3rd Degree, in the state of Iowa in 1997.

DA Fruehauf reported this case to the Clergy and Faith Leader Initiative.

DA Fruehauf commented, “It is very common for child sexual assault victims to disclose prior abuse for the first time long after it has happened, sometimes years

later. Even in that circumstance, crime victims should know that they will be listened to and taken seriously, that their case will be investigated, and that while charges may not be able to be brought in every case, appropriate cases can and will be prosecuted.”

Survivors of clergy or faith leader abuse, their friends and family, or anyone who has information about the actions of Jeffrey Anthony Charles are encouraged to report that information to DOJ either online at SupportSurvivors.widj.gov or by calling 1-877-222-2620.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office with assistance from Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Criminal Investigation. Victim services are provided by the Douglas County District Attorney’s Office. The case is prosecuted by Douglas County DA Mark Fruehauf and assisted by DOJ Assistant Attorney General Rebecca Sommers. The criminal complaint is available on request.

As in any criminal proceeding, Mr. Charles is presumed innocent until proven guilty.