

PRESS RELEASE:

Sept. 24, 2025

Man convicted of child sex crimes after telling church pastors of misdoings

Office of Leavenworth County Attorney

Todd Thompson, County Attorney

<https://www.facebook.com/LeavenworthProsecutor>

LEAVENWORTH, Kan. --- A Linwood man who admitted to two church pastors that he sexually abused children is awaiting sentencing.

On Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025, a Leavenworth County jury found 47-year-old Charles S. Bell guilty of two counts of aggravated indecent liberties with a child.

According to court documents:

In Sept. 2023, deputies from the Leavenworth County Sheriff's Office were sent to an area high school to investigate a report of past sexual abuse involving a juvenile student. The student identified Bell as their abuser and disclosed that the abuse had occurred over several years. During a follow-up interview, the victim stated that Bell would sometimes insert his head into the shower while they were undressed. The victim also stated that Bell would reach into their pants and touch them inappropriately, as well as put his hands inside their shirt to touch their chest while they were asleep in their room.

In January 2024, Leavenworth County investigators were notified by a Lenexa police detective that they received a DCF hotline report involving Charles Bell. That report outlined admissions made by Bell of sexual acts toward at least one child. The hotline report was submitted by two pastors from a church in Johnson County. Those pastors detailed a conversation they had with Bell following a December 2023 church service. After telling Bell that they would report what he was telling them, Bell continued discussing his inappropriate interactions with children.

Based on the evidence presented, the Leavenworth County Attorney's Office ultimately filed two counts of aggravated indecent liberties with a child against Bell.

During the course of the case, an issue arose as to whether the pastors' testimony should be allowed under K.S.A. 60-429, the penitential communication privilege. Ultimately, the Court allowed the testimony during the trial, which began on Monday, September 22, 2025, and lasted one and a half days.

County Attorney Todd Thompson said, "Penitential communication privilege is not something I've seen used in court often. In fact, this is the first case I've seen litigated. While the defendant may have wanted to repent, we're grateful to the pastors for not giving him a pass for his actions."

Sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 14, 2025.