

Church backing pastor jailed on molestation charges

by [Bob Allen](#)

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. (ABP) -- An American Baptist church in California is standing behind its pastor, currently held on multiple charges of child molestation.

Tommy Gene Daniels, 48, pastor of First Baptist Church in Rio Linda, Calif., was [arrested](#)

Dec. 9 on felony charges of lewd or lascivious acts with a child and engaging in three or more acts of sexual conduct with a child. His bail is \$6 million.

According to local media reports, police arrested Daniels on a warrant in Citrus Heights, Calif., but postponed publicizing the arrest while they continued to investigate the case. The *Sacramento Bee* [quoted](#) a police officer who said Daniels' original \$1 million bail was increased because he is considered a flight risk.

The charges stem from acts that allegedly occurred between June 2004 and June 2007. Police said they investigated an initial complaint against Daniels in 2008 but could not find enough evidence to make an arrest. After a second alleged victim came forward in recent months, the district attorney filed charges Dec. 9 and Daniels was arrested that evening.

[First Baptist Church](#) of Rio Linda is affiliated with Growing Healthy Churches, a [network](#)

of 220 churches in northern California and northern Nevada. Formerly known as American Baptist Churches of the West, it is one of 34 regional bodies [affiliated](#) with American Baptist Churches USA. The group changed its name in 2006

because some congregations did not want to be identified with a national denomination they believed was becoming too tolerant of homosexuality.

The church released a statement of support for the pastor Jan. 1. "Until such time as the courts prove Pastor Tom Daniels guilty, we have an obligation to support him and his family," said the statement [quoted](#) in local media.