



## PRESS RELEASE

March 10, 2023

State of Ohio v. Dennis W. Laferty  
Geauga County Court of Common Pleas  
Case No. 23C000043

### LOCAL PASTOR INDICTED BY GRAND JURY

CHARDON – Geauga County Sheriff Scott A. Hildenbrand and Geauga County Prosecutor James Flaiz announced today that Dennis W. Laferty, age 37, of Thompson Township, Ohio, was indicted by the Geauga County grand jury following an investigation by Detectives with the Sheriff's Office and Investigators with the Prosecutor's Office into allegations of sexual abuse against minors. The indictment charges Mr. Laferty with five counts of Sexual Battery, felonies of the third degree; one count of Gross Sexual Imposition, a felony of the third Degree; and one count of Sexual Imposition, a misdemeanor of the third degree. The third degree felony counts in the indictment each carry a maximum potential sentence of 5 years in prison. The Defendant is the Pastor of the Thompson United Methodist Church located at 6758 Madison Road, Thompson, Ohio 44086.

According to the indictment, the conduct is alleged to have occurred on or between 2019 and January of 2023. Law Enforcement believes that there may be additional victims. Sheriff Hildenbrand is asking that anyone having information regarding this investigation please call the Geauga County Department of Job and Family Services at 440-285-9141.

"This is still an ongoing investigation so we are unable to provide further comment at this time" said Geauga County Prosecutor James Flaiz. An indictment is only a probable cause finding by the grand jury. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the State's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. A warrant was issued for the Defendant's arrest and he was apprehended this evening in Crawford County. The case will be scheduled for arraignment before Judge David Ondrey in the Geauga County Court of Common Pleas once the defendant has been brought back to Geauga County.