



EFFINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

JEFFREY FUESTING, CHIEF OF POLICE

110 SOUTH THIRD STREET, EFFINGHAM, ILLINOIS 62401

SPECIAL NEWS RELEASE

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Juveniles Arrested in Church Burglary

Three juveniles were arrested on February 15, 2019 in connection with an incident that occurred on February 9, 2019 between 10:50 P.M. and 11:10 P.M. at St. Anthony Church, 417 N. 3rd Street, Effingham. Two of the juveniles, a 14-year-old from Altamont and a 17-year-old from Wheeler, are currently being held at Madison County Juvenile Detention Center. The third juvenile, a 16-year-old from Effingham, was given a Notice-To-Appear and released to guardians.

Church officials found damage to various items throughout the sanctuary as well as food strewn around the building and alerted the department on February 12th of the incident. Upon review of security footage, Bureau of Patrol officers identified three males and one female as suspects. The video also showed one of the suspects attempting multiple times (unsuccessfully) to start a fire.

Bureau of Criminal Investigations detectives followed up on the leads, ultimately conducting interviews and obtaining confessions from the three juveniles. The 14-year-old was charged with Attempted Arson, Burglary, and Criminal Damage to a Place of Worship. The 16- and 17-year-olds were each charged with Burglary and Criminal Damage to a Place of Worship. A fourth adult suspect is being sought and is expected to be arrested in connection with the incident.

Chief Jeffrey Fuesting is very pleased with the outcome of this incident, stating, "Working together with Church leaders, our officers and detectives were able to swiftly bring this case to a conclusion. Current technology utilized by the Church allowed our department to follow leads and make arrests shortly after being notified of the incident. In addition, we were able to obtain information through this case which helps multiple other pending cases our department is investigating. Teamwork between the community and our department was critical in solving this case."

If you see it, say it! The Effingham Police Department encourages you to call the Police Department immediately at 217-347-0774 to report suspicious activity in your neighborhood or business district. Information can be given anonymously by calling the CRIMESTOPPERS Tip Line at 217-347-6583. Anonymous callers can receive up to \$1,000 cash rewards.