

## Elk River pastor charged

by Jim Boyle  
Editor

An Elk River pastor has been charged in Sherburne County 10th District Court with financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

The Rev. William Neal Matthews, the pastor of Solid Rock Church and World Outreach Center, allegedly transferred money out of his mother-in-law's account while acting as the 94-year-old woman's power of attorney, according to a criminal complaint filed Jan. 6 at the Sherburne County Government Center in Elk River.

The victim resided at Guardian Angels Nursing Home, 400 Evans Ave.

Prior to April of 2009, her daughter, Mary Matthews, had acted as her power of attorney. As of that time the woman's bill had been paid in full each month.

After Mary Matthews died, her husband, Bill Matthews, 58, took over as the person responsible for the alleged victim's finances, the complaint said.

The victim's sister reported to Elk River police in May of 2010 that the defendant was not paying her mother's bills with her money at the nursing home. Guardian Angels reported being owed more than \$3,500 at the end of April.

Law enforcement got involved and began investigating the matter. After this occurred, the defendant paid the amount owed within a 30-day window, the complaint said.

An Elk River investigator reviewed bank records and determined that money from the woman's account was used to pay the IRS on behalf of the defendant in the amount of \$931.12 in October of 2009.

Additionally, the investigator found that the defendant transferred money from the woman's account to his own account on four separate occasions totaling \$1,720 in May of 2009.

These transfers were all made while she had a large balance owed to Guardian Angels, the complaint said.

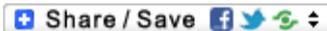
When the investigator met with Matthews, he reportedly acknowledged that he was responsible for the woman's finances after his wife died. Matthews reportedly told police her monthly income was barely enough to cover her monthly obligations.

He denied using her money for his own use, but he could not offer an explanation how her unpaid balance could have been as high as \$4,023.

He also had no explanation for the transfers of money from her account into his own account or to the IRS on his behalf, according to the complaint.

Matthews has been charged with one felony count of financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult, which carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine.

A court appearance for Matthews has been scheduled for 8 a.m. on Jan. 26.

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