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Former seminarian sued over sexual assault claim

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CHARLOTTE — A former seminarian has been accused of sexual abuse and assault while serving in youth ministry at Sacred Heart Church in Salisbury.

John Brian Kaup has been named in a civil lawsuit filed by an unnamed female parishioner and her parents, who allege that he raped the 17-year-old the night of Dec. 25, 2013, on church grounds.

Salisbury police investigated the matter in 2016 with no criminal charges filed.

The civil lawsuit, filed Feb. 2 in Mecklenburg County Superior Court, also alleges that Kaup, about 27 at the time, continued to have sex with the teenager until mid-2014, not long before she left for college.

After Kaup left the seminarian program in May 2014, Father John Putnam, who had been pastor at Sacred Heart Church, and not knowing of the allegations, hired him to work as the youth minister at St. Mark Church in Huntersville, where Father Putnam had been transferred as pastor. Kaup worked there until the summer of 2016.

The Diocese of Charlotte and Bishop Peter Jugis are co-defendants in the civil lawsuit, which claims that they were negligent in their oversight of Kaup.

According to the lawsuit, the unnamed plaintiff and her parents are seeking a total of at least \$150,000 in actual and punitive damages from Kaup, the diocese and the bishop.

Kaup is no longer employed by the diocese or in ministry in the diocese, according to diocesan spokesman David Hains. Beyond that, Hains said, "we cannot discuss ongoing litigation."

— Catholic News Herald

