

## **Former church a drug greenhouse , sheriff says - Family in custody after 200 marijuana plants found at Detroit house of worship, second site.**

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MOUNT CLEMENS -- Although the sign above the storefront still says United Gospel Tabernacle **Church** , police say the **former** Detroit house of worship served **as a greenhouse** where hundreds of marijuana plants were grown.

In addition to the **former church** , a Clinton Township family also used **a former** manufacturing facility on Detroit's east side to grow marijuana, Macomb County Sheriff Mark Hackel said Friday.

"This was **a** major grow operation," Hackel said.

Gary Pollard, 57; his wife Diane, 57; and their son, Michael, 34 -- all of Clinton Township -- were arrested earlier this week after **a** tip led the Macomb County Sheriff's multijurisdictional **drug** task force to the **former church** on McNichols, and an old manufacturing facility on Mount Elliot.

"This started with **a** tip in early May," Hackel said. "We understand this has been in operation for quite some time. They were growing high-quality hydroponic marijuana."

In addition to seizing 200 plants, police also seized \$50,000 in cash, Hackel said. The plants had **a** street value of more than \$500,000, he said.

Omar Johnson, an employee of the Perfect Blend barbershop next door to the **former church** , said he saw people going in and out of the facility, "but I thought they were going to fix it up," he said. "They didn't say much to anyone."

Hackel said he was not surprised that **a former church** was serving **as a drug** front.

"It's **a** sad reality, but is it surprising? Nothing surprises me anymore," Hackel said.

The Pollards owned both the **former church** and the old manufacturing facility, Hackel said.

"They also owned **a** home in St. Clair County," Hackel said.

All three suspects were charged in 41-B District Court in Clinton Township with delivering and manufacturing marijuana, **a** 15-year felony; and conspiracy to deliver and manufacture marijuana, which also is **a** 15-year felony.

The Pollards were charged in Macomb County because the conspiracy took place there, Hackel said. "We also have information that they were distributing this marijuana at the Jobbie Nooner last week," Hackel said of the Lake St. Clair boating event.

Gary and Michael Pollard were in the Macomb County Jail on Friday in lieu of \$75,000 bond. Diane Pollard also was incarcerated in the jail on \$50,000 bond.

Gary Pollard had a **drug** conviction in 1978, Hackel said. "He was convicted of delivering PCP," Hackel said.

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