



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services

8181 Independence Blvd. • Baton Rouge, LA 70806

[www.lasfm.org](http://www.lasfm.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Vinton Woman Arrested for Aggravated Arson & Cruelty to Juveniles**

**CALCASIEU PARISH (February 19, 2026)** – A Vinton woman has been arrested in connection with an intentionally set fire at a local church while two children were inside the building.

At approximately 3:53 a.m. on February 18, 2026, the Vinton Fire Department responded to a structure fire at Christian Life Church, located in the 1800 block of West Street in Vinton. Three individuals were inside the church at the time of the fire, including two juveniles. All occupants were able to escape without injury.

Investigators with the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office (SFM) determined that the fire was intentionally set. Following the investigation, SFM deputies identified 25-year-old Kim Benniefiel of Vinton as the suspect.

Benniefiel has been charged with one count each of Aggravated Arson, Cruelty to Juveniles, and Simple Arson of a Religious Building.

The Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office reminds the public that anyone with information regarding fire-related crimes is encouraged to submit an anonymous tip by visiting [lasfm.org](http://lasfm.org) and selecting the "Arson Fires icon."

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