



Man steals from purse in church office



Christopher Douglas Hardwick

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LA PORTE, Texas -

Investigators asked for help in the search for a suspect accused of stealing a purse from a La Porte church.

According to La Porte police, the theft happened last month. Officers said a man went to the First Baptist Church and walked out with credit cards and a cellphone belonging to the pastor's wife, during a morning service.

"I came in and saw the contents of my purse emptied out right here on the sofa and it took me a minute to realize what had happened," said Cindey Gill, the victim.

Police said they had a big clue that could lead to an arrest -- surveillance video of a man using the stolen credit cards at a nearby Target. Investigators said he bought \$1,500 worth of items. He was also caught on tape at a Chevron using the stolen cards, according to police.

"Anytime you have someone commit such a brazen act, that's something we want to attack right away. But to go ahead and step into one of our local churches, that's something that has a heightened value," said John Krueger with the La Porte Police Department.

Officials identified the man as Christopher Douglas Hardwick. Investigators said Hardwick was last seen in a white Chevy Cobalt.

Anyone with information is asked to call La Porte police.