



GATECITY CHURCH

Frequently Asked Questions

We want to address recent developments with clarity and care for everyone involved. The following answers are meant to provide transparency while honoring the dignity of those affected.

1. What has happened?

- Dustin Pennington has stepped down from his role as Lead Pastor of GateCity. This follows the recent surfacing of information related to past events involving a former volunteer in a previous church context (Cornerstone Assembly, 2011–2012). As these matters were recently revisited, it became clear to Dustin that his earlier response to serious allegations fell short of the discernment and action required by pastoral leadership.

2. When did these events take place?

- The events in question occurred between 2011 and 2012

3. Why is this coming to light now?

- While the events themselves took place years ago, the full clarity and weight of earlier information only became evident recently to Dustin, which he immediately shared with the Elders.

4. Did this happen at GateCity?

- No. These events took place in a previous church context before GateCity was established.

5. Was the individual involved in any GateCity precursory ministries like New Bridge Church or IHOP Atlanta?

- The individual volunteered at IHOP Atlanta between 2015-2017. IHOP Atlanta leadership had no knowledge of any reports of misconduct regarding this individual prior to or during their involvement at IHOP Atlanta. The individual had no access to children or teens.
- **It was brought to our elder's attention after we first published the FAQ's that though the individual did not have access to serve in children or teen ministries at IHOP Atlanta, he did serve on worship teams that included teenagers. IHOP Atlanta leadership received no reports of misconduct during this timeframe.*

6. Why did Dustin resign?

- Dustin came to the conviction that his past handling of serious allegations did not meet the level of care and discernment required for pastoral leadership. As a result, he offered his resignation.

7. Is GateCity leadership in agreement with Dustin's decision to resign?

- Yes, after having reviewed all the information related to the events in question, GateCity's elders and Board of Directors agree that it is appropriate for Dustin to resign from his leadership role at GateCity.

8. Was anyone harmed?

- The events involved an adult individual who reported having been harmed in 2012. Though this is not a current situation within our church, we are deeply grieved by what we understand occurred.

9. Is anyone currently in danger?

- There is no known ongoing threat connected to this situation.



10. Was anything covered up?

- GateCity's elders were not aware of all the relevant details until recently. At the time, Dustin handled the matter in a manner he believed to be appropriate. However, with greater clarity and reflection, Dustin recognized that his earlier response was insufficient.

11. Are law enforcement or authorities involved?

- We are reviewing the matter to ensure that all necessary reports have been made.

12. What is GateCity doing now?

- We are taking this seriously and have taken or are taking the following steps:
 - Reviewing our internal processes for responding to allegations of misconduct and safeguarding practices;
 - Engaging trusted outside advisors to review our processes, to recommend improvements, and to ensure best practices are followed; and
 - Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are following the appropriate reporting processes.

13. Who is leading the church now?

- The elders are providing leadership during this time. Additional updates regarding leadership will be shared in the coming days.

14. What does this mean for the future of GateCity?

- We remain committed to being a healthy, presence-centered church marked by integrity, accountability, and care for people. We believe the Lord will continue to guide us as we move forward with humility.

15. How can we respond as a church family?

- We ask you to pray—for those who were affected by this situation, for Dustin and his family, and for our church. We also ask for your prayers that we walk in humility, unity, truth, and grace as we move forward together.

16. Why does this matter now if it happened so long ago?

- Time does not remove responsibility. As greater clarity came, it became clear to Dustin and to our elders that his earlier response was insufficient of what was required of pastoral leadership and it was important for him to respond with integrity.

17. Is GateCity legally responsible for what happened?

- No. These events occurred in a previous church context and did not involve GateCity.

18. Will Dustin still be on staff with GateCity Church?

- No. Dustin is no longer serving in any staff or leadership role at GateCity Church.

19. Will Dustin and his family still be in church fellowship with GateCity Church?

- It is Dustin and Michelle's desire to stay in fellowship at GateCity as members (not on staff), after walking through a season of reflection and restoration to fellowship under the accountability of and submission to the elders.

20. What will GateCity's relationship be with Dustin and his family moving forward?

- GateCity Church loves Dustin and Michelle Pennington and desires to cover and care for them as active members of our church family. This will be navigated with wisdom, accountability, and care.

21. Can we contact Dustin & Michelle? How can we care for them at this time?



- They are asking for a few weeks to reflect and process this transition as a family. The most helpful way you can care for them right now is through prayer, especially for the Lord's direction for what is next for their family.

22. How can I process this or ask further questions?

- We encourage you to reach out to our elders or pastoral team so we can walk with you through this in a healthy way.

23. Who are GateCity Lawrenceville's elders and how can I communicate with them?

- Billy Humphrey – billy.humphrey@gatecityatl.com
- Rolando Gonzalez – rolando.gonzalez@gatecityatl.com
- Olivia Gonzalez – olivia.gonzalez@gatecityatl.com
- Ashlond Bolden – ashlond.bolden@gatecityatl.com
- Jim Stern – jim.stern@gatecityatl.com

If you have a question, you can submit one to our team below

