

Dallas Morning News: Dallas Appeals Court Halts Discovery in Gateway Church Defamation Lawsuit

November 24, 2025 Ronald Breaux

PRACTICES Litigation, Religious Institutions

Haynes Boone is representing Gateway Church in its defamation case filed by Cindy Clemishire, with Litigation Partner [Ronald Breaux](#) leading the legal team on behalf of the firm. [The Dallas Morning News](#) reported in [late October](#) that Breaux argued the church should be dismissed from the case based on the “ecclesiastical abstention doctrine, which comes from the First Amendment’s mandate that the government not sponsor one religion over others or interfere with religious freedom.”

In a follow up story, *DMN* is reporting on a significant appellate update in the case: Discovery has been halted and both parties have until Dec. 29 to submit additional arguments. An excerpt of that article is below:

A Dallas-based appeals court has sided with Gateway Church, allowing for discovery to be temporarily halted in a defamation suit against the church. ... After a Dallas County judge denied the church’s request to dismiss the lawsuit, Gateway filed an appeal on Nov. 14 with the Fifth Court of Appeals, asking the court to halt discovery in the case. ... The order, filed Friday, grants the request by halting all court proceedings in the case.

In a statement, Ron Breaux, Gateway’s attorney, said the church’s legal team and the church’s elders were pleased by the ruling.

“Gateway and its leaders simply do not belong in this lawsuit, which asks a secular court to pass judgment on the church’s statements and actions while investigating its former pastor’s misconduct,” Breaux said. “As we’ve stated from the beginning, no one in Gateway’s current leadership had knowledge of its former pastor’s criminal behavior, and they have endeavored to lead the church with integrity and accountability during a difficult time.”

Read more in [The Dallas Morning News](#).