

A Black Church Burned: Sanctuary, Loss, and Place-Making in Knoxville, TN



Thursday, February 16 • 5:30 PM
Lindsay Young Auditorium, Hodges Library, Rm 101
WEBCAST: tiny.utk.edu/todnethomas
Free and open to the public

In 2015, someone set fire to the College-Hill Seventh Day Adventist Church. The FBI investigated the arson in relation to a number of Black church fires set that summer, but no suspect was ever apprehended. In her lecture, Professor Thomas will explore how local explanations for the church fire move past the search for a single assailant and instead foreground processes of loss and place-making, including interpretations of urban renewal, gentrification, and perspectives on the end-times.



TODNE THOMAS is a socio-cultural anthropologist and Associate Professor of African American Religious Studies at Harvard Divinity School. In collaboration with Afro-Caribbean and African American congregants, Thomas conducts ethnographic research on the racial, spatial, and familial dynamics of black Christian communities in the U.S. Conceptually, her work integrates critical race and kinship theories to understand the racial and moral scripts of evangelicalism and neoliberalism.

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