

N A RICHLY ILLUSTRATED,

revelatory study of Philadelphia's

Germantown Avenue, home to a diverse array of more than ninety Christian and Muslim congregations, Katie Day explores the formative and multifaceted role of religious congregations within an urban environment.

Germantown Avenue cuts through Philadelphia for eight and a half miles, from the affluent neighborhood of Chestnut Hill through the high-crime section known as "the Badlands." The congregations along this route range from the wealthiest to the poorest populations in Philadelphia. Some congregants are immigrants who find safety and support in close fellowship, while others are long-time residents whose congregations work actively to provide social services. Cities undergo constant change, and their congregations change with them. As Day observes, some congregations have sprung up in former commercial strips, harboring new arrivals and recreating a sense of home, and others form anchors for neighborhoods across generations, providing a connection to the past and a hope of stability for the future.

Drawing on years of research, in-depth interviews with religious leaders and congregants, and a wealth of demographic data, Day demonstrates the powerful influence cities exert on their congregations, and the surprising and important impact congregations have on their urban environments.



KATIE DAY is the Charles A. Schieren Professor of Church and Society at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. She is the author of three other books and numerous articles that look at how religion impacts a variety of social realities.

“Katie Day has delivered an empirically rich, thoroughly insightful portrait of religious life in Philadelphia’s Germantown area. Particularly unique is her ethnographic exploration of the complexities of identity and socialization for Muslims and Latina Pentecostals who share the Avenue. *Faith on the Avenue* makes a significant contribution to the ecological tradition in the study of urban religion. Elegantly—at times poignantly—written, it will be read for years to come.”

OMAR M. McROBERTS

AUTHOR OF *STREETS OF GLORY*

“*Faith on the Avenue* situates the varieties of religious communities within the dynamic changes that affect their surrounding communities. It is particularly successful in capturing the struggle to develop and maintain sacred spaces in physical and social environments that frequently generate apathy and rejection from the general public. It engages urban and theological issues, and demonstrates the contributions faith communities make to their members and their neighborhoods.”

DAVID W. BARTELT

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, GEOGRAPHY & URBAN STUDIES,
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

“Since the founding of Germantown in the seventeenth century, the avenue that bears its name has been a center of spirituality and freedom of thought, leading William Penn to call his Pennsylvania colony a ‘holy experiment.’ That experiment continues today, as Katie Day so brilliantly and vividly portrays in *Faith on the Avenue*, an insightful and important study of the cultural, demographic, and religious diversity of this historic urban corridor. Whether you know Philadelphia or not, this work is relevant to and valuable in understanding urban America and the critical role that faith and religious identity continue to play in its communities.”

SAM KATZ

FILM PRODUCER, *PHILADELPHIA: THE GREAT EXPERIMENT*