



Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
February 1, 2018

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ARREST MADE IN MITCHELL COUNTY CHURCH FIRE

Atlanta – Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph Hudgens, Mitchell County Sheriff W.E. Bozeman, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) announced today that an arrest has been made in an arson fire that heavily damaged the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Camilla, Ga.

Investigators from Sheriff Bozeman's office, the Dougherty County Police Department, and the ATF arrested Kentrez Gardner, 37, of Norman Park, Ga., yesterday afternoon in Dougherty County, Hudgens said. Gardner has been charged with one count of first-degree arson and one count of burglary. He is currently being held in the Mitchell County Jail.

According to investigators, Gardner provided to them a full confession to burglarizing and setting fire to the church, located at 8572 Pinecliff Road, on January 30. Damage is estimated at more than \$100,000. The suspect was reportedly a former member of the church.

Commissioner Hudgens would like to thank the Thomas County Sheriff's Office, the Dougherty County Police Department and the Colquitt County Sheriff's Office for assisting with the investigation and arrest.