

**Lighthouse Community Church  
Nikiski, Alaska**

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**Church History Highlights**

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**1984** The vision for a Southern Baptist Church in Nikiski began with meetings in the homes of Frankie and Retha Hall and Jim & Lenor Earley and led by Don Shannon, Sr.

**February 3, 1985:** First Baptist Kenai under the leadership of Pastor Roy Williams and the missions committee began the North Road Baptist Mission in the home of Joe & Janie Tieskie, led by Elmer Sizemore, Director of Missions for the Tustumena Association which later became Kenai Peninsula Association and then dissolved in January, 2001). There were 5 present for the first service and two months later there was an average attendance of 32 with the high attendance of 48.

**June 1, 1985:** Ben and Evelyn Sheeran arrived on the field to serve as the first Pastor/Church Planter and served until November 1986.

**November 10, 1985:** The mission church began meeting Sunday mornings in the North Kenai Elementary Gymnasium and on Sunday evenings in the Nikiski Methodist Church.

**January 1986:** With the help of a loan from First Baptist Kenai, 3 acres were purchased on the North Spur Highway.

**October, 1986:** The first church building was completed with the help of First Baptist Kenai and work teams from Mississippi and Texas.

**February 1, 1987:** William "Bill" & Elizabeth Branch were called as Pastor and wife.

**December 28, 1989:** The Church was incorporated with the State of Alaska as North Kenai Baptist Church of Nikiski, Alaska. The church indebtedness was reduced from \$190,000 to \$100,000 and used solid oak pews were purchased.

**1995** The Church voted to change its official name to North Kenai Baptist Church, doing business as (d/b/a) "Lighthouse Community Church."

**October 1, 1996:** Pastor Bill Branch resigned, and Marlin & Neva Starnes served as interim Pastor from October until December 19, 1996.

**December 20, 1996:** Denver & Debbie Copeland were called to serve as Pastor and wife.

**1997:** New sound system was installed, large sign and reader board installed, handicap ramp built, parking lot expanded to twice the size.

**1998:** Trees to the south of building were cleared, a circular driveway added, parking lot again doubled in size.

**1999:** An education building, approximately 4,500 sq. ft, was built, new outside lighting installed on church, Community Appreciation day held and fed over 500 people.

**2000:** Original church building was totally remodeled, upstairs and downstairs, new entryway built with covered drive through.

**2001:** A storage area, approximately 420 sq.ft. was built, 125 sq. ft. lower floor entryway was added between buildings. World Changers ministry began in summer months and continued until 2011. During that ministry many homes were painted, repaired, additions built, and handicap accessible improvements made in the community.

**2001:** Church volunteers began serving breakfast at the local Nikiski Elementary school which later became the Nikiski/North Star Elementary School and continued until 2005.

**2002:** The parsonage was built, a youth pastor apartment and bedroom added in church. Corey McGee came to serve in the children, youth and music ministries of the church.

**2003:** Shower trailer built, consisting of 8 stalls, independent boiler system, built 16 sq. ft. storage building. Preschool known as Lighthouse Christian School opened in August 2003, with Ginnie (Handley) Hall serving as Preschool Administrator. Purchased 10 acres adjacent to church property.

**2004:** Additional educational space and multi-purpose room approximately 1,500 sq. ft., was added to the education building built in 1999. The sanctuary was extended and an administration/youth building, approximately 3,400 sq. ft., was built. Elementary School added to existing Preschool, and laundry facility added.

**2005:** Handicap restroom in rear of sanctuary, cry room, and sound room completed. Recreation area consisting of ball fields, 2 volleyball courts, 2 basketball courts, soccer field, picnic area, and 1/2 mile walking track construction began on 10 acres purchased in 2003, with future plans for a gymnasium for community use.

**October 2008:** Denver Copeland resigned and church member Randy Lewis served as interim pastor and 1 year later was called as Pastor along with his wife Destiny.

**2010:** Kandice Hightower came to serve as Lighthouse Christian School Director until August 2013 when the school closed.

**2010:** Randy Lewis resigned and Corey McGee served as interim pastor and was called as Pastor in 2011.

**2013:** Corey McGee resigned and church attendance dropped significantly during this time as several large businesses in the area closed and people moved out of the area. With a continued decline in members and attendance, the church formed a leadership team from the remaining members to seek assistance of a transitional pastor. Among whom were Charles & Gloria Thompson, and Don & Carolyn Hayhurst.

The church voted to request the Alaska Baptist Association to oversee the church as a Mission work and assist in obtaining the transitional pastors, Sunday school material, as well as some financial help with support of a pastor.

**2014:** Bill and Sharon Messer began to serve as transitional pastor in October 2014 and continues to serve at the present. Due to the membership declining to less than 25 families, the leadership team recommended and the church voted to "mothball" the large church building and began meeting in the administrative/apartment building. The pastor would live in the apartment upstairs and a Sunday School classroom would meet in the upstairs area also. The leadership team began remodeling the large church building with the goal of moving the services back to the large building if attendance reached 50 by Easter Sunday of 2015. That goal was met and the church resumed services in the newly remodeled building.

**2015:** The church name was officially change on 4/28/15, to Lighthouse Community Church in order to drop North Kenai Baptist Church from the name with the State of Alaska.

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### **MINISTRIES HIGHLIGHTS 1985-2015**

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- Backyard Bible Clubs/VBS have been held annually.
- Sunday School -all ages
- Preschool/ Children's Worship
- AWANA program
- Wednesday Evening activities for children & youth
- Wednesday Evening Bible Study
- Wednesday Night Community Dinners
- Monday-Friday Preschool & Elementary School
- Women's ministry
- WMU/Crisis Pregnancy Center Sewing
- Christmas Play ministries
- Youth Worship
- Youth Evangelism conferences
- Youth Retreats
- School Breakfast Program
- Discipleship training

- World Changers ministry (in and out of state)
- High School Bible studies
- Interpretive dance ministry
- Guitar lessons taught
- Archery lessons taught
- Sports Camps ministry
- All night prayer vigils
- Praise Team music ministry
- Bus and Van ministry
- Community Food Pantry ministry
- Senior Center Bible study
- Prison ministry Bible study
- Youth Thrift Store ministry
- AA Meetings ministry
- Gideons ministry
- Sports hospitality room lunches
- Housing visiting High School sports teams
- Disaster Relief Ministry
- Hosted North Peninsula Chamber of Commerce lunches
- Combined Nikiski Community-wide Services conducted with five other area churches
- Senior's Club House held at Retha (Hall) Veal's
- Friendship Rescue Mission (2005)
- Weekend Camp-in for homeless youth
- Community Concerts
- Paintball games
- Youth all-night camps, games and bonfires
- School backpacks distribution to community
- Assist Agencies when requested, Red Cross, Crisis Pregnancy Center, Love, Inc., Boys and Girls Club, United Way, Rock (local crisis group); Nikiski Senior Center, Alaska CDC (rural development), USDA (rural development), PAC (state rural development).

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### CHURCH STATISTICS

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<b>Present Membership:</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Capacity of Building:</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Value of Building:</b>	<b>\$1,685,200</b>
<b>Attendance Averages:</b>	
<b>Sunday School:</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Worship Service:</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Wednesday Prayer:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Average Tithes &amp; Offerings:</b>	<b>\$6,000/mo.</b>

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**Church Today**

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Lighthouse Community Church continues to grow in attendance. The spiritual ministries of the church have continued to be provided. Currently we have children's Sunday School for all ages, Women's Sunday School group, Men's Sunday School group, Children' Worship Service and Nursery available. A music team leads in worship music.

Future ministries planned are: Father's Day Bar-B-Que, Backyard Bible Clubs, Family night picnic and hosting work teams to do repair work on the parsonage and church educational wing.

The church desires to see the community provided with a place where the gospel is preached to the lost and believers can grow in spiritual maturity and Bible knowledge. The church also desires to be a place where the needs of the community are met and the LORD glorified.

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### **Nikiski Community Profile**

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Nikiski is an unincorporated rural community located approximately 16 miles from the City of Kenai, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska. The area encompasses approximately 69.6 sq. miles of land. Oil companies exploring and producing oil and natural gas from offshore and onshore facilities, oil related service industries, private businesses and tourist businesses make up the majority of the income for the area. Tesoro Oil Company operates a refinery processing oil into gasoline and jet fuel. The electric company for the entire Kenai Peninsula has its main generating facilities located in Nikiski. Nikiski has an Olympic sized swimming pool and recreation area, Elementary School, Middle/High School, two fire stations, post office, airport, Senior Center, Community Center, and a shopping center. The State owned 3,460 acre Captain Cook Recreation Area is located at the end of the Kenai Spur Highway containing several campgrounds and Cook Inlet beach access.

The population of the Nikiski area is approximately 5,000. Plans for a large gas pipeline from Prudhoe Bay and terminating in Nikiski and a processing facility is planned for the future and currently survey groundwork is underway. An large influx of people is expected to relocate to the area in the next few years.

Currently there are 11 different denominational churches between the City of Kenai and the Nikiski area. A number of the pastors from the different congregations meet weekly to pray for each other and the needs of the community.