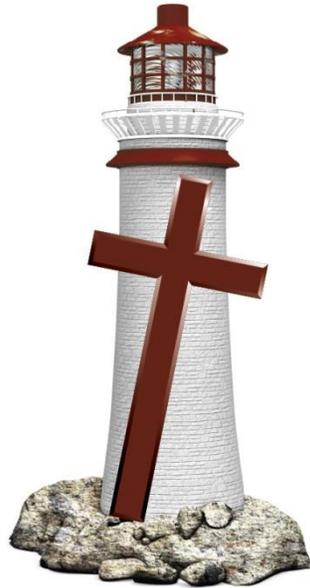


Lighthouse Baptist Church of the Lehigh Valley



Where Faith and Friendship Meet

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OVERVIEW

The core group of Lighthouse Baptist started as a group of believers who visited a number of churches looking for a home. After a number of weeks, not finding a church where they felt they belonged, an ad hoc meeting was called by Jack B. to discuss how the group wanted to move forward. The meeting was held at the home of Jack and Diane B., on Sunday, July 25, 1999 at 9:30 a.m.

Those present at the ad hoc meeting included 30 members, 2 visitors, and 1 preschooler.

The group decided they wanted to stay together to worship and think about starting their own church. The worshippers met in private homes during the upcoming months.

The first organizational meeting was held on August 22, 1999 at the North Whitehall Ambulance building at which time the first officers were nominated and elected.

Following morning worship, a business meeting was held on August 29, 1999. The name, **Lighthouse Baptist Church of the Lehigh Valley**, suggested by the children, was chosen for the name.

The next business meeting was held on September 12, 1999 at which time it was noted that the corporation was approved on September 7, 1999 which declares the church to be a legal PA non-profit corporation, and a tax identification number was obtained. It was also decided unanimously at this meeting that Dr. Backlund be called to be the pastor until the end of 1999.

The Lighthouse Baptist Church of the Lehigh Valley was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on September 7, 1999, for the purpose of maintaining public services for the worship of God. There were 36 charter members who were dedicated on November 21, 1999. Many of those original members remain with the Lighthouse today.

Tim and Donna B.s' children attended the Christian school at Calvary Temple, and in a conversation with the pastor of that church, he volunteered Lighthouse Baptist to use their chapel on Sunday mornings. The church voted at the next meeting which was held on September 26, 1999, to accept Calvary Temple's generous offer. The chapel had a piano, an organ, four microphones, and a sound system, and the Lighthouse was allowed to use the adjoining "overflow room" as well for a cost of \$100 per week. Coffee and baked goods were offered every week for fellowship time from the founding of the church.

The church was incorporated in September of 1999, and Dr. Paul Backlund was unanimously called and agreed to become the pastor in September of 1999. The sanctuary choir was formed, and weekly Bible studies were held in the private homes of various members.

Rev. Dr. Clay Woodbury, Area Director from the American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware (ABCOPAD) from Valley Forge, met with the worshippers in October to help the church determine how to connect with the American Baptist Association. Pastor Gary Whittington advised about church structure, and it was decided to have a one-board church and four ministries: Family/Worship, Missions, Education, and Finance with standing committees for by-laws and site location. This suggestion was presented to the congregation and approved in January, 2000. The congregation voted on the members of the ministries and standing committees on February 6, 2000. In the spring of 2000, the church joined the Welsh Wyoming Association.

The Church Covenant, Statement of Faith and Principles, and Purpose were finalized by the Family/Worship Ministry, and accepted by the congregation on March 3, 2000. The by-laws were drafted by the committee by March 14 and on April 10 were presented to the Church Council. A business meeting of the Church approved the by-laws, including the Covenant, Statement of Faith, and the Polity statement on April 16, 2000.

On July 25 the church leadership met with Dr. Mark Tracy of the American Baptist Extension Corporation to discuss future plans. The discussion included funding requirements, loan possibilities, options of purchasing land versus an existing structure, location, size requirements, etc.

A pledge campaign was conducted in order to establish a basis for determining an estimated operating budget. Pledges in the amount of \$61,000 were received by October, 1999 for the year 2000. Pastor Gary Whittington met with the congregation on November 29, 1999 to outline the structure of a one-board church and how it is implemented. This proposed church structure, with some modifications to meet the early church needs, was presented to the congregation and approved at the congregational meeting in January, 2000.

The church purchased 15 acres of land in western Lehigh County on Independent Road in Weisenberg Township from Nancy Wessner Farms in August of 2002 with plans to build a church there in the future. The first worship service on the land was an open air service on August 12, 2003 with Rev. Dr. Clayton Woodbury leading the service. The service was followed by a picnic at the home of Tim and Donna B.. Dr. Backlund announced his plans to resign as the pastor at the end of 2003. Pastor Wayne Miller was called as the interim pastor in February 2004. The congregation determined by June that Pastor Miller should become the full-time pastor in July of 2004. By this time there were approximately 60 members. Because the church had time limitations at Calvary Temple and wanted to have a facility available at times other than Sunday mornings, a building was rented in a former furniture store in Breinigsville in May of 2004, which the congregation was able to renovate to include classrooms along with a sanctuary and pastor's office.

Hymnals and 120 chairs were purchased (after initially using donated nursing home chairs). One Saturday the church was flooded from heavy rain that leaked in due to the bypass construction on Route 222. Everyone came with shop vacs and towels to clean up for the Sunday service! The church spent five years meeting in this facility.

The 15.35 acres of land was paid off on March 17, 2007, to the New Tripoli Bank, and in July of 2008, ground was broken for a new building. Construction began by Martin Construction in October 2008 and was completed May 10, 2009. The first worship service was held at the present facility on May 17, 2009.

In 2014 there are presently approximately 100 members. The Lighthouse Baptist Church (the name the children suggested) has a motto: "where faith and friendship meet."

Activities in the church include the women's group, Beacons of Joy, which meets monthly and does service projects, meets for retreats during the year, and hosts a ladies' breakfast every other Tuesday. The Men's Fellowship Group, meets two Thursdays a month for breakfast. Prayer time and Bible study are held once a week. The evening of the fifth Sunday of a month is used for hymn sings, gospel group concerts, and special speakers (chalk artists, etc.). The choir presents Christmas and Easter musicals/cantatas as well as anthems each Sunday morning. Several Revival Weeks were held in previous years. The Missions Ministry supports local groups like Life Choice's/CareNet, Jacobs' Brothers Kids Camp, the Gideons, Samaritan's Purse, Food Pantry, and others.

Each July since 2009, Lighthouse has hosted five-day Vacation Bible School. Since 2012 Push the Rock Christian Coed Sports Camp was included each morning, followed by Vacation Bible School in the afternoon. Presently, there are two adult and three children's Sunday School classes. Children's church service is held for children through sixth grade.

In June of 2012 Pastor Miller left Lighthouse to pursue his doctorate degree. Various supply pastors filled the pulpit for the next six months. A special meeting was held on August 11, 2013 to vote on the recommendation to change our affiliation to the Southern Baptist Convention in the event we call a Southern Baptist minister to be our pastor. It was unanimously approved.

Pastor Hal Hopkins was called as interim pastor in a Special Business meeting on November 25, 2012, and in October 2013, he was called to become the shepherd of Lighthouse Baptist Church.

In June of 2013 the first "Picnic on the Hill" was held at the present site. Free food for the community, musical entertainment, children's games, Christian clowns, and good fellowship were on the agenda.

Friday Night at the Movies made its debut in the fall of 2013. A Christian movie is shown generally once a month for the church and the public. Free refreshments are served.

A Praise and Worship Team was initiated in summer of 2012 to lead the congregation in song at the beginning of each service.

Fun Zone for children ages 5 through 13 began in the summer of 2013 and is held from April through October for three hours monthly on a Saturday evening.