

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Greater Friendship Baptist Church

Other names/site number: Alaska Heritage Resources Survey Site No. ANC-02639

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 903 East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue

City or town: Anchorage State: AK County: Anchorage Zip Code: 99501

Not for Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national X statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	6 May 2019
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>Alaska</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau</b>
<b>or Tribal Government</b>	

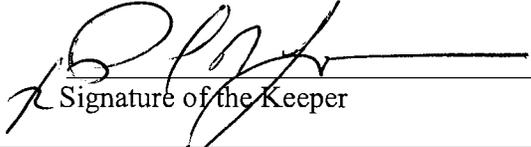
Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

6/21/2019  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion/religious facility

Social/civic

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion/religious facility

Social/civic

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: cement

Walls: concrete block

Roof: asphalt shingle

Other: N/A

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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The Greater Friendship Baptist Church stands at the northeast corner of Ingra Street and East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Fairview neighborhood, about a mile east and south of downtown Anchorage. The neighborhood is a mix of commercial, light industrial, and residential properties. Greater Friendship Baptist Church, completed in 1955, is a simple unadorned, rectangular concrete block building. It is 40.2' x 75' with 3,200 square feet of interior space. The building replaced the congregation's first building on the site that was destroyed by fire in 1953. A concrete slab with the date and names of the founding congregation adorns the exterior south façade. There is a detached shed off the north façade. The remainder of the lot is a parking lot that was paved in 1984. To the best of members' memory, the interior has been minimally changed since the church's construction. The minimal exterior changes include moving the location of the primary entrance from the southern façade to the south end of the east façade in 1977 and adding an access ramp in 2017.

After meeting in several temporary locations, the congregation of the Greater Friendship Baptist Church moved into their first church building in this location in 1952. A fire destroyed the building in 1953, and the current church, built in its place, opened in 1955. The second church used materials salvaged from the original church as well as from Anchorage First Baptist Church that burned the same year.

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The building is one-story over a raised basement. It is a simple unadorned rectangular concrete block building, 40.2' x 75', with a gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. A steeple consisting of a small belfry topped by an unadorned spire is at the south end of the roof. The lot includes the church, surrounding paved parking lot, and a small modern shed. There is minimal landscaping, found primarily along the west façade. The parking lot was paved in 1984. The church is surrounded by apartments and small homes.

The primary entrance is through paired steel doors located at the south end of the east façade. The primary entrance was initially on the southern façade but was moved to the east facade in 1977. The original entrance was replaced with cement blocks matching the rest of the southern façade. The relocation did not impact the interior arrangement of space. The earlier entrance opened to a stairwell, as does the later entrance. The entrance doors are in a gabled roof arctic entry that houses stairs leading up to the nave or down to the basement classrooms. The gabled roof is hidden by a diagonally slanted false front. In 2017, an access ramp was added to the primary entrance. There are two additional doors located in a second gabled roof arctic entry on the north end of the east façade. One door leads to the rooms behind the pulpit, and another downstairs to the basement. Both entryways are sheathed in horizontal wood lap siding that is painted grey.

The east and west facades are divided into six bays delineated by simple concrete block buttresses. On both facades, the fenestration includes three sets of tall paired casement windows with yellow glass. These windows denote the location of the nave on the interior of the building. Five smaller paired casement windows are on the north end of the building (one on the east facade, two on the north facade, and two on the west facade). These windows denote the location of the office space. One single casement window is located on the south end of the west facade. Six paired casement windows are located on the west facade at the basement level.

The south facade has no windows and is adorned with a large cross under the gabled end. There is a concrete slab inscribed with the date and names of the founding congregation attached on the west corner of this facade. At the southwest corner, two signs, one facing west and one facing south, note the church name, service hours, pastor, and phone number.

The main floor of the church has offices and the nave. The pastor's office is located at the top of the entrance stairs at the south end of the building. The nave has nine rows of pews divided by two aisles, and a south facing altar. Above the altar, the pulpit separates the choir and the band areas. A baptismal bath, covered from view by curtains when not in use, is behind the pulpit. The nave has capacity for 250 parishioners. Behind the pulpit and at the north end of the building are additional offices, including the secretary's office. The basement contains classrooms, restrooms, a kitchen, and a mixed-use room. To the best of church memory, no significant changes have been made to the interior.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

Religion

Ethnic History: Black

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1955-1967

**Significant Dates**

1955

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

African-American

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Greater Friendship Baptist Church is of statewide significance as the first African-American church established in Alaska and for its leadership in the establishment of subsequent African-American churches in the state. In addition, the church is significant because of the election in 1965 of its pastor, Leo A. Josey, Sr., as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president of the Alaska Baptist Convention; the first African-American elected to the organization's governing board. Greater Friendship was the first African-American church accepted into the modern Southern Baptist Convention, a national Protestant Christian denomination. The building represents the increased post-World War II African-American population in Alaska. Although it is a religious property, the building is significant for its association with the history of the establishment of a permanent African-American community in Anchorage and for its congregation that broke down barriers to African-Americans in the state and national Southern Baptist conventions, addressing criteria consideration A regarding religious properties. The period of significance begins in 1955 when the congregation started meeting in the current church building, which replaced the initial building destroyed by fire. It is on the site of the original building and some materials salvaged from the earlier building were used in the second building. The period of significance concludes in 1967 with the church established in Anchorage, having encouraged other African-American churches to be founded in Alaska and having been a leader in the movement to integrate the SBC in the state and the nation.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

In 1940, the United States Army started construction of Elmendorf Field and Fort Richardson outside the city of Anchorage. The surge in construction opportunities attracted thousands of people to Anchorage, among them African-Americans. In 1940, ten African-Americans were counted as living in Anchorage, but by the early 1950s, several thousand lived in the community. More moved to the city after World War II when there were jobs available to build Cold War facilities and the necessary infrastructure for them. Many African-Americans came as soldiers assigned to Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Air Force Base, the latter established as a separate entity after the war. The African-American men and women who came north were part of the Great Migration, the movement of millions of African-Americans during the twentieth century away from the American South and towards perceived opportunities in the American North and West.

Most of the African-Americans who did not live on the military bases settled south and east of downtown Anchorage in a low-lying stretch of land along Chester Creek known as Eastchester Flats. The 1940 U.S. Census did not include Eastchester Village, but the 1950 census reported its population as 3,096, with many identified as African-Americans. At the time it was outside of the Anchorage city limits and known for its bars and clubs, many of which were black owned. The community attracted prominent black musicians including Billie Holliday and Stomp Gordon to perform in Anchorage. Eastchester Flats was incorporated into the City of Anchorage in the 1950s, and today it is part of the Fairview subdivision.

In 1951, Anchorage's African-American community had no church of their own, nor was there an African-American church anywhere in Alaska. Anchorage's First Baptist Church hosted African-American services in their basement, although African-Americans could attend its services. Under the leadership of Reverend Charles Kennedy, 32 believers formed Greater Friendship Baptist Church, an African-American congregation. Within five weeks, the church had more than a hundred members.

In April 1951, the nine congregations of the Alaska Baptist Convention unanimously accepted Greater Friendship as a member. Subsequently, the national Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) accepted Greater Friendship and another African-American congregation, Community Baptist Church of Santa Rosa, California, integrating its organization three years before the Supreme Court issued the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that segregation was unconstitutional. This acceptance was a shift within the SBC from decades of problematic treatment of African Americans. In 1965, Greater Friendship's pastor Reverend Leo Josey, Sr. was unanimously elected 2nd vice-president of the Alaska Baptist Convention--the first African-American pastor to be on the governing board of the state's Baptist Convention. The SBC noted Josey's election. Today, the SBC, the largest Protestant and second largest Christian denomination in the United States, counts more than 4,000 congregations predominantly African-American as members.

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The acceptance of Greater Friendship Baptist Church and the election of Reverend Josey signal the integration and transformation of the SBC into an organization more in keeping with essential Christian values regarding equality, love, universal brotherhood, and social justice. The SBC gives a Kennedy-Boyce Award annually to recognize pastors who advance race relations within the church. It is named for the founding pastors of Greater Friendship and Community Baptist Church.

The Greater Friendship congregation built the first African-American church in Alaska, where the current church stands today, and moved into it in 1952. Subsequent black churches in Anchorage grew from Greater Friendship, either directly as with Anchorage's Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church (1952) and New Hope Baptist Church (1960), or indirectly. From then to now, these churches have been centers for Anchorage's black community. Several African-American pastors in the community have been at the forefront in civic movements. In 1962, Greater Friendship served as base of operations when the local NAACP chapter picketed Anchorage grocery store Carrs for discriminatory hiring practices. In the 1980s, Reverend Josey was a leading advocate for meeting the critical need for low and middle-income housing in Anchorage.

In 1953, the original Greater Friendship building burned to the ground. The congregation rebuilt on the site, using materials salvaged from their church and from the Anchorage First Baptist Church that also burned that year. The new Greater Friendship church opened in 1955. Since then, the congregation has grown from the original 32 members to nearly 250. In addition to weekly services, the building is used for Sunday school, prayer meetings, baptisms, weddings, funerals, food giveaways, and a host of other functions. It has been a base for activism in the local black community. Greater Friendship Baptist Church is a center for African-Americans in Anchorage and a beacon of hope and faith for Alaskans of many ethnicities.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Alaska Baptist Convention. *Twentieth Annual Session of the Alaska Baptist Convention*, University Baptist Church, College, AK, August 10-12, 1965.

Anderson, George C. "Alaska Frontier...Attracts Negro Pioneers." *Color*, April 1953.

Baptist Features. *Baptist Press*, August 21, 1965, 5.

Barcus, Gwen. "Greater Friendship Flourishes in Fairview." *Anchorage Daily News*, June 16, 1984, EE1, EE9.

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Copeland, E. Luther. *The Southern Baptist Convention and the Judgment of History: The Taint of an Original Sin*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002.

Corley, Asta. "A Golden Opportunity For Ministry—Milestone: Greater Friendship Baptist Church Celebrates Its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," *Anchorage Daily News*, June 23, 2001, B5.

Hunke, Naomi Ruth. *I Have Planted Thee in This Land: The Story of the First 25 Years of Southern Baptist Missions in Alaska*. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Baptist Convention, 1971.

Lawrence, Zelmer, interview by Bruce Melzer, c. 1982-1983. Bruce Melzer Oral History Interviews, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage.

Newman, Mark. *Getting Right With God: Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945-1995*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2001.

Overstreet, Everett Louis. *Black on a Background of White: A Chronicle of Afro-Americans Involvement in American's Last Frontier, Alaska*. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Black Caucus, 1988.

Program for Greater Friendship Baptist Church's 29<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Anchorage, AK, June 22, 1980.

Rev. Leo Josey, Sr. obituary, *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 2010, A11.

Willis, Alan Scot. *All According to God's Plan: Southern Baptist Missions and Race, 1945-1970*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2005.

Willoughby, Karen L. "Southern Baptist Racial Barriers Broke First in Alaska, California," *Baptist Press*, February 14, 2003. Accessed February 3, 2018, [bpnews.net/15240/southern-baptist-racial-barriers-broke-first-in-alaska-california](http://bpnews.net/15240/southern-baptist-racial-barriers-broke-first-in-alaska-california).

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

N/A

\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

\_\_\_ previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register

\_\_\_ designated a National Historic Landmark

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
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**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Greater Friendship Baptist Church

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** ANC-02639

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 61.2099022                      Longitude: -149.86637810000002

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Block 19D, Lot7A, Parcel # 003-114-11-000, Third Addition, Municipality of Anchorage.  
The church is bounded on the west by Ingra Street and on the south by East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire lot owned by the church.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: David Reamer  
organization: N/A  
street & number: 636 West 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
city or town: Anchorage state: AK zip code: 99503  
e-mail: dkreamerjr@alaska.edu  
telephone: 512.825.8402  
date: March 22, 2018; revised May 2, 2019

Edited by Joan Antonson and Summer Louthan, Alaska Office of History & Archaeology

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
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County and State

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
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- 4819 Active Address
- Public Road
- One Way Road
- Platted/Not-Built Public Road
- Private Road
- Private Road, 4WD Access
- Driveway
- Buildings
- Parks
- Military Boundary
- Gate Preventing Through Access
- Railroad Tracks

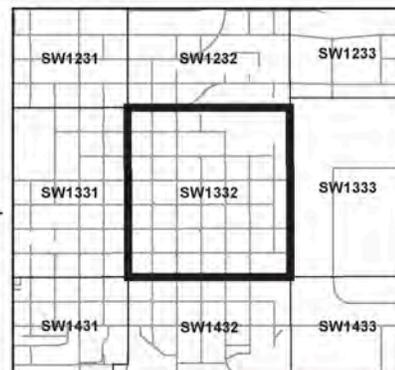


1 inch = 360 feet

Municipality of Anchorage  
 Addressing  
 addressing@muni.org  
 907.343.8466  
 4700 Elmore Road  
 P.O. Box 196650  
 Anchorage, AK 99519-6650



This map is derived from Geographic Information Systems data developed and maintained by the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). This map is not the official representation of any of the information included and is made available to the public solely for informational purposes. This map may be outdated, inaccurate and may omit important information. Do not rely on this information. The Municipality of Anchorage will not be liable for losses arising from errors, inaccuracies or omissions in the map.



Anchorage Bowl SW1332 13N03W17 15 Feb 2018

Vicinity Map

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Greater Friendship Baptist Church

City or Vicinity: Anchorage

County: Anchorage

State: AK

Photographer: David Reamer

Date Photographed: February 2, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0001)  
East façade, camera facing west.

Photo 2 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0002)  
North façade, camera facing south.

Photo 3 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0003)  
West façade, camera facing east.

Photo 4 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0004)  
South façade, camera facing north.

Photo 5 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0005)  
Concrete slab inscribed with date and names of founding congregation, south façade, camera facing north.

Photo 6 of 8 (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0006)  
Church sanctuary, camera facing north.

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Photo 7 of 8 (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0007)  
Church sanctuary, camera facing south.

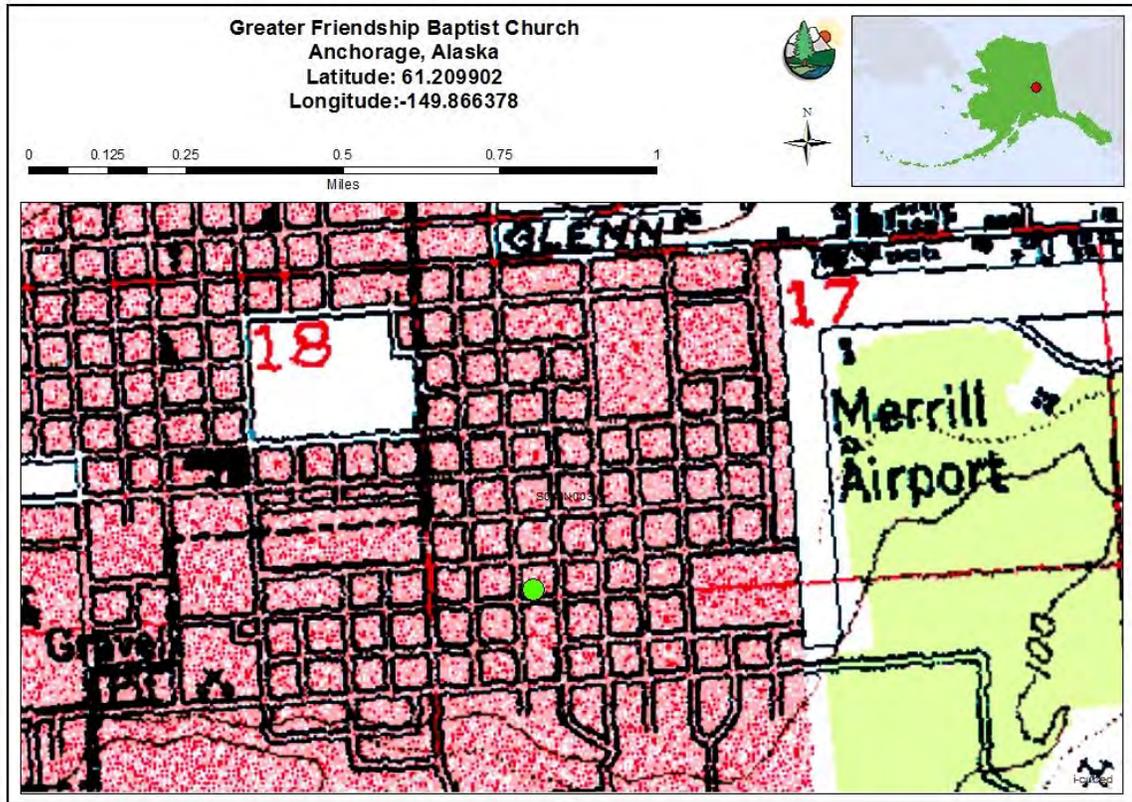
Photo 8 of 8 (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0008)  
Interior of main entrance, camera facing west.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Name of Property

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County and State









**GREATER FRIENDSHIP**  
**BAPTIST CHURCH**  
1000 1st St. N. Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Phone: 616-235-1111  
Fax: 616-235-1112  
www.greaterfriendship.org



**GREATER FRIENDSHIP**  
**BAPTIST CHURCH**  
*Caught up in a Divine Partnership*  
—Service Hours—  
Sunday School 9:30 AM  
Sunday Worship 10:30 AM  
Wednesday Prayer Walk Study 7:00 PM  
Pastor  
Michael A. Benton  
Church Office  
733-273-8338

THE GREATER-FRIENDSHIP-BAPTIST-CHURCH

ORGANIZED JUNE 22-1951 BY REV. C. KENNEDY

DEACONS

E. WYLDER  
W. JOHNSON  
W. GORDON  
H. BUTLER

TRUSTEES

H. MILLER  
L. HENSLEY  
E. MCCASKY  
D. HAWKINS  
C. ROBINSON

MINISTERS

REV. BELTON  
REV. S. JONES  
REV. A. WHITE  
REV. WALKER  
REV. ALEXANDER

MOTHERS

S. M. WALKER  
B. MILLER

HANEST B. BUTLER

PASTOR

C. KENNEDY

MEMBERS

A. BODY  
C. WYLDER  
V. ROBINSON  
M. BUCHANON  
S. BRODLEY  
R. POWELL  
S. HENSLEY  
S. BELTON  
V. M. HAWKINS  
K. BLACKWELL  
J. BLACKWELL  
BRO. MORGAN  
E. JONES  
BRO. HILL  
M. L. WILLIAMS  
C. ANTHONY

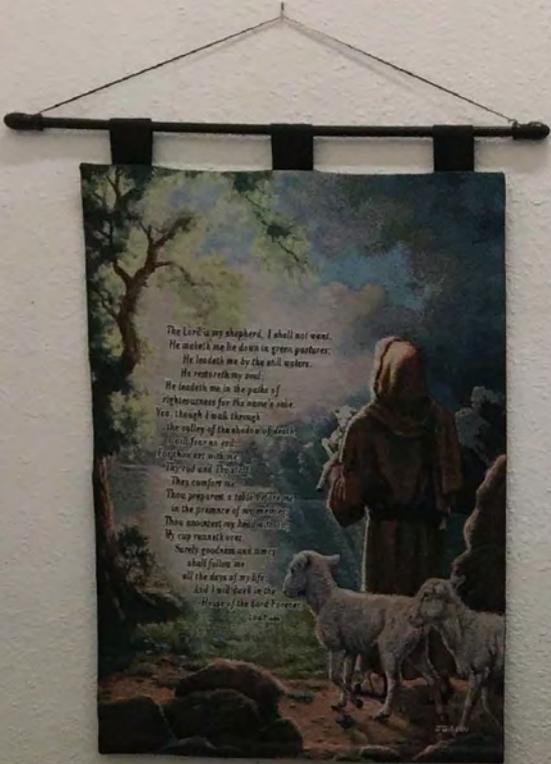
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N. S. COCHRAN  
E. APPERROMPEY

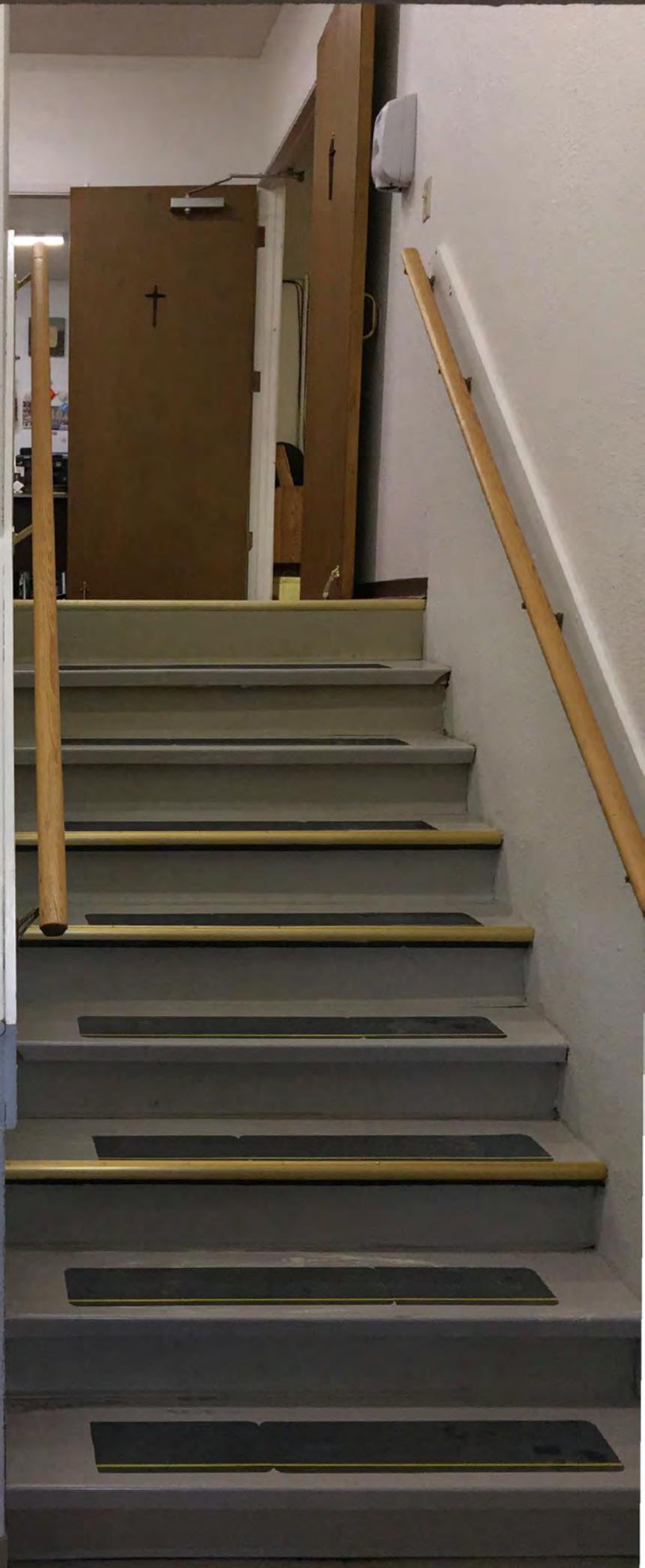
CLERK J. JOHNSON  
TREAS. M. BOYD  
CHOIR DIR. E. WYLDER







The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
He leadeth me by the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul:  
He leadeth me in the paths of  
righteousness for the name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through  
the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil:  
For thou art with me,  
Thou art my staff and my rod,  
Thou comfortest me.  
Thou preparest a table for me  
in the presence of mine enemies:  
Thou increasest my banquet,  
Thou art my strength and my shield.  
Thy goodness and mercy  
shall follow me  
all the days of my life:  
And I will dwell in the  
house of the Lord forever.



National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Resubmission

Property Name: Greater Friendship Baptist Church

Multiple Name:

State & County: ALASKA, Anchorage

Date Received: 5/8/2019      Date of Pending List:       Date of 16th Day:       Date of 45th Day: 6/24/2019      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: RS100003109

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal                  | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request            | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver                  | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                   | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      6/21/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Greater Friendship Baptist Church is significant at the state and local levels and meets National Register Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Black, Religion, and Social History. The first African American congregation to establish in Alaska, Greater Friendship Baptist became a leader in the establishment of subsequent African American churches in the state and the congregation's leaders became influential spokesmen for the local African American community during the 1950s and 1960s. The church was one of the first to integrate the national Southern Baptist Convention upon its admittance in the early 1950s. The church played a central role in the religious, social and cultural development of Anchorage's African American community.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept NR Criterion A

Reviewer Paul Lusignan      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229      Date 6/21/2019

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No



***GREATER FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH***

*903 East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue*

*Mailing: P.O. Box 203088, Anchorage, Alaska 99520-3088*

*Michael A. Bunton, Pastor*

*E-mail: pastor-gbc@alaskan.com*

*Office: (907) 272-4346 • E-mail: secretary-gfbc@alaskan.com*



May 9, 2018

Dear Ms. Jo Antonson:

The Pastor and members of Greater Friendship Baptist Church located at 903 East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Anchorage, AK, desires to have our church placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This church is owned solely by the membership.

Please forward all questions, concerns and the nomination updates to Deaconess Linda Simmons (lsimmons@gci.net), phone number (907) 230-2253.

In Christ,

Michael A. Bunton, Pastor  
Greater Friendship Baptist Church

**ALASKA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**VOTING RECORD FOR NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY AND DISTRICT NOMINATIONS**

Date: September 25, 2018

It is moved that the **Greater Friendship Baptist Church** qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places

criterion/criteria: **A**

criteria consideration/considerations: **A**

level of significance: **national**

period significance: **1955-1967**

areas of significance: **Religion, Social history**

Moved by: **Michael Hawfield**      Seconded by: **Douglas Veltre**

Vote on motion:

IN FAVOR	OPPOSED	ABSTAIN	RESULT
Colberg		Bittner	Passed 6-0-1
Drabek			
Hawfield			Rejected
Jensen			
Poulson			Tabled
Veltre			

If tabled or rejected, reasons or instructions on how to proceed:

Other comments:

Vice-chair Ross was chairing the meeting and as chair chooses to only vote if there is a tie.

Alaska CLG National Register of Historic Places  
Nomination Review Report Form

Property name: Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Address: 903 East 13th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501  
Certified Local Government: Municipality of Anchorage  
Date of public meeting when nomination reviewed: Historic Preservation Commission

Criteria of significance (For more information on the criteria see *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*) 8/23/18

- Criterion A: Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to our history.
- Criterion B: Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Criterion C: Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represents a work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (a district).
- Property has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.
- None of the above.

Integrity (For more information on integrity see *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*)

- The property retains authentic historic character from its period of significance.
- The property has been significantly altered and no longer retains authentic historic character from its period of significance.

Review comments

Commission

- The commission recommends that the property is significant, retains integrity, and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- The commission recommends that the property does not meet the criteria of significance and/or no longer retains integrity and is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- The commission chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. An explanation of the lack of a recommendation is attached.

Chief Elected Official

- The chief elected official recommends that the property is significant, retains integrity and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- The chief elected official recommends that the property does not meet the criteria of significance and d/or no longer retains integrity and is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- The chief elected official chooses not to make a recommendation on the nomination. An explanation of the lack of a recommendation is attached.

Attach additional sheets for further comments.

Monty Rogers  
Signature, CLG Commission Chair  
Printed name: Monty Rogers

23 Aug 2018  
Date

[Signature]  
Signature, Chief Elected Official  
Printed name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF PARKS & OUTDOOR RECREATION  
Office of History & Archaeology

550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1310  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565  
907.269.8721  
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha>

October 3, 2018

Re: 3330-2 Greater Friendship Baptist Church

Joy Beasley, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 7228  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Attn: Paul Lusignan

Dear Paul:

Enclosed are two disks that contain the true and correct copy of the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Greater Friendship Baptist Church in Anchorage, Alaska. Office of History and Archaeology staff worked with members of the church and a graduate student to prepare the National Register of Historic Places documentation. The Alaska Historical Commission, the state review board, reviewed and discussed the nomination at their September 25, 2018 meeting and determined it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Municipality of Anchorage is a Certified Local Government and its Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the nomination and determined the property eligible for listing in the National Register. Their review report is included with the nomination.

Before the Alaska Historical Commission meeting, the owner of the building received a letter about the National Register of Historic Places program with information on the results of listing and an invitation to review the nomination package and comment. A letter from the church supporting the nomination is part of the package. The pastor and a church member attended the state review board meeting, and the pastor spoke in support of the nomination. The author of the nomination was notified of the meeting, attended, and spoke briefly.

The mayor of the Municipality of Anchorage received program information and an invitation to review the package and comment. Before the meeting, the Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, issued a statewide press release, with specific mention of National Register nomination review.

At their September 25, 2018 meeting, Alaska Historical Commission members determined the Greater Friendship Baptist Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its association with religion and social history. They determined criteria consideration A for religious properties is adequately addressed. The period of significance for the property is 1955-1967, starting when the building was built and ending when the church was established in Anchorage and achieved the integration of the Southern Baptist Convention. Commission members said the building is of national significance as the first African-American church accepted into the modern Southern Baptist Convention. I have reviewed the documentation, concur with the determination of the Alaska Historical Commission, and have signed the form.



Joy Beasley  
Page 2  
October 3, 2018



If you have any questions regarding the nomination please contact me at e-mail [jo.antonson@alaska.gov](mailto:jo.antonson@alaska.gov) or phone 907.269.8714.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan M. Antonson".

Joan M. Antonson  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

enclosures: 2 disks with registration form, 2 maps, 8 photographs, Alaska Historical Commission and Municipality of Anchorage voting records, letter from church

Cc: Michael A. Bunton, Pastor, Greater Friendship Baptist Church, P.O. Box 203088, Anchorage, AK 99520-3088, [pastor-gbc@alaskan.com](mailto:pastor-gbc@alaskan.com)  
Kristine Bunnell, Municipality of Anchorage, P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage, AK 99519-6650, [bunnellkr@muni.org](mailto:bunnellkr@muni.org)

SG3109

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Greater Friendship Baptist Church

Other names/site number: Alaska Heritage Resources Survey Site No. ANC-02639

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 903 East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue

City or town: Anchorage State: AK County: Anchorage Zip Code: 99501

Not for Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

X national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

Returned

<u>John M. Antonson</u> Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	3 October 2018
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>Alaska</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Returned

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion/religious facility

Social/civic

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion/religious facility

Social/civic

Returned

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: cement

Walls: concrete block

Roof: asphalt shingle

Other: N/A

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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The Greater Friendship Baptist Church stands at the northeast corner of Ingra Street and East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Fairview neighborhood, about a mile east-southeast of downtown Anchorage. The Fairview neighborhood is a mix of commercial, light industrial, and residential properties. Greater Friendship Baptist Church, completed in 1955, is a simple unadorned, rectangular concrete block building. The 40.2' x 75' building has 3,200 square feet of interior space. The building replaced the congregation's first building on the site that was destroyed by fire in 1953. A concrete slab with the date and names of the founding congregation adorns the exterior south façade. There is a detached shed off the north façade. The remainder of the lot is a parking lot that was paved in 1984. To the best of members' memory, the interior has been minimally changed since the church's construction. Exterior changes include moving the location of the primary entrance from the southern façade to the south end of the east façade in 1977 and adding an access ramp in 2017.

After meeting in several temporary locations, the congregation of the Greater Friendship Baptist Church moved into their first church building in this location in 1952. A fire destroyed the building in 1953, and the current church, built in its place, opened in 1955. The second church used materials salvaged from the original church as well as from Anchorage First Baptist Church that burned the same year.

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

The building is one-story over a raised basement. It is a simple unadorned rectangular concrete block building with a gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. It is 40.2' x 75'. A steeple consisting of a small belfry topped by an unadorned spire is at the south end of the roof. The lot includes the church, surrounding paved parking lot, and an unattached modern shed. There is minimal landscaping, found primarily along the west façade. The parking lot was paved in 1984. The church is surrounded by apartments and small homes.

The primary entrance is through paired steel doors located at the south end of the east façade. The original primary entrance was on the southern façade, but moved in 1977. In 2017, an access ramp was added to the primary entrance. The doors are in a gabled roof arctic entry that houses stairs leading up to the nave or down to the basement classrooms. The gabled roof is hidden by a diagonally slanted false front. There are two additional doors located in a second gabled roof arctic entry on the north end of the east façade. One door leads to the rooms behind the pulpit, and another downstairs to the basement. Both entryways are sheathed in horizontal wood lap siding painted grey.

The east and west facades are divided into six bays delineated by simple concrete block buttresses. On both facades, the fenestration includes three sets of tall paired casement windows with yellow glass. These windows denote the location of the nave on the interior of the building. Five smaller paired casement windows are on the north end of the building (one on the east facade, two on the north facade, and two on the west facade). These windows denote the location of the office space. One single casement window is located on the south end of the west facade. Six paired casement windows are located on the west facade at the basement level.

The south facade has no windows and is adorned with a large cross under the gabled end. There is a concrete slab inscribed with the date and names of the founding congregation attached on the west corner of this facade. At the southwest corner, two signs, one facing west and one facing south, note the church name, service hours, pastor, and phone number.

The main floor of the church has offices and the nave. The pastor's office is located at the top of the entrance stairs at the south end of the building. The nave has nine rows of pews divided by two aisles, and a south facing altar. Above the altar, the pulpit separates the choir and the band areas. A baptismal bath, covered from view by curtains when not in use, is behind the pulpit. The nave has capacity for 250 parishioners. Behind the pulpit and at the north end of the building are additional offices, including the secretary's office. The basement contains classrooms, restrooms, a kitchen, and a mixed-use room. To the best of church memory, no significant changes have been made on the interior.

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Returned

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

Religion

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1955-1967

**Significant Dates**

1955

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

Returned

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Greater Friendship Baptist Church was the first African-American church established in Alaska. Subsequent African-American churches in Alaska directly or indirectly grew from the Greater Friendship congregation. The church is nationally significant for its role in integrating the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest Protestant and second largest Christian denomination in the United States. Greater Friendship was the first African-American church accepted into the modern SBC, marking a reversal of decades of problematic relations with minorities in general and African-Americans in particular. Greater Friendship pastor Leo A. Josey, Sr. was the first African-American pastor to represent the SBC at a state level when he was unanimously elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president of the 1965 Alaska Baptist Convention. The permanent Greater Friendship Baptist Church building represents the increased post-World War II African-American population in Alaska and their commitment to building a community in Alaska. The period of significance begins in 1955 when the congregation started meeting in the current church building, which replaced the initial building destroyed by fire. The period of significance concludes in 1967 with the church established within Anchorage and having achieved the integration of the SBC.

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

In 1940, the United States Army started construction of Elmendorf Field and Fort Richardson outside the city of Anchorage. The surge in construction opportunities attracted thousands of fortune seekers. Among the newcomers were African-Americans. In 1940, as few as ten African-Americans lived in Anchorage, but by the early 1950s, several thousand lived in the community. These men and women were part of the Great Migration, the movement of millions of African-Americans during the twentieth century away from the American South and towards perceived opportunity in the American North and West.

Due to pervasive housing discrimination, most African-Americans in Anchorage settled in Eastchester Flats, south and east of downtown Anchorage, a low-lying stretch of land along Chester Creek. The 1940 U.S. Census did not include Eastchester Village, but the 1950 census reported its population as 3,096. At the time it was outside of the Anchorage city limits and known for its bars and clubs, many of which were black owned. The community attracted prominent black performers, including Billie Holliday and Stomp Gordon. The village was incorporated into the City of Anchorage in the 1950s, and today it is part of the Fairview subdivision.

In 1951, Anchorage's African-American community had no church of their own, nor was there an African-American church anywhere in Alaska. Anchorage's First Baptist Church hosted African-American services in their basement. There, under the leadership of Reverend Charles Kennedy, 32 believers formed a congregation—Greater Friendship Baptist Church. Within five weeks, the church had more than a hundred members.

In April 1951, Alaskan Baptist churches unanimously accepted Greater Friendship into the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), integrating the denomination three years prior to the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. This acceptance was a shift within the SBC from decades of problematic treatment of African Americans. In 1845, the SBC had split from northern Baptists over the issue of slavery, including a desire to allow missionaries to own slaves. During the Civil War, the SBC endorsed secession and described the war as just. In the decades after the war, SBC policies and practices promoted exclusion and a perception of African-Americans as inferior to whites. The SBC was, and is, the largest Protestant and second largest Christian denomination in the United States. The inclusion of Greater Friendship was immediately followed by acceptance of an African-American church in California, then others across the country. In 2018, more than 4,000 historically African-American churches are members of the SBC.

In 1965, Greater Friendship Pastor Reverend Leo Josey, Sr. was unanimously elected 2nd vice-president of the Alaska Baptist Convention--the first African-American pastor to represent the SBC at a state level. The acceptance of Greater Friendship, and the promotion of Reverend Josey, signaled or even hastened the transformation of the SBC into an organization more in

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

keeping with essential Christian values regarding equality, love, universal brotherhood, and social justice.

The congregation built the first African-American church in Alaska, where the current Greater Friendship Baptist Church stands today, and moved into it in 1952. Subsequent black churches in Anchorage grew from Greater Friendship, either directly as with Anchorage's Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, or indirectly. From then to now, churches have been the constant center for Anchorage's black community. Many of the pastors have been at the forefront in moments of community protest and celebration.

In 1953, the original Greater Friendship building burned to the ground. The congregation rebuilt on the site, using materials salvaged from their church and from the Anchorage First Baptist Church that also burned that year. The new church opened in 1955. Since, the congregation has held weekly services in the building. From the original 32 members, the congregation has grown to nearly 250. The church is used for Sunday school, prayer meetings, baptisms, weddings, funerals, food giveaways, and a varied host of other functions. Greater Friendship Baptist Church remains a center and a beacon of hope and faith to many Alaskans.

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Alaska Baptist Convention. *Twentieth Annual Session of the Alaska Baptist Convention*, University Baptist Church, College, AK, August 10-12, 1965.

Anderson, George C. "Alaska Frontier...Attracts Negro Pioneers." *Color*, April 1953.

Baptist Features. *Baptist Press*, August 21, 1965, 5.

Barcus, Gwen. "Greater Friendship Flourishes in Fairview." *Anchorage Daily News*, June 16, 1984, EE1, EE9.

Copeland, E. Luther. *The Southern Baptist Convention and the Judgment of History: The Taint of an Original Sin*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002.

Corley, Asta. "A Golden Opportunity For Ministry—Milestone: Greater Friendship Baptist Church Celebrates Its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," *Anchorage Daily News*, June 23, 2001, B5.

Hunke, Naomi Ruth. *I Have Planted Thee in This Land: The Story of the First 25 Years of Southern Baptist Missions in Alaska*. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Baptist Convention, 1971.

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

Lawrence, Zelmer, interview by Bruce Melzer, c. 1982-1983. Bruce Melzer Oral History Interviews, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage.

Newman, Mark. *Getting Right With God: Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945-1995*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2001.

Overstreet, Everett Louis. *Black on a Background of White: A Chronicle of Afro-Americans Involvement in American's Last Frontier, Alaska*. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Black Caucus, 1988.

Program for Greater Friendship Baptist Church's 29<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Anchorage, AK, June 22, 1980.

Rev. Leo Josey, Sr. obituary, *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 2010, A11.

Willis, Alan Scot. *All According to God's Plan: Southern Baptist Missions and Race, 1945-1970*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2005.

Willoughby, Karen L. "Southern Baptist Racial Barriers Broke First in Alaska, California," *Baptist Press*, February 14, 2003. Accessed February 3, 2018, [bpnews.net/15240/southern-baptist-racial-barriers-broke-first-in-alaska-california](http://bpnews.net/15240/southern-baptist-racial-barriers-broke-first-in-alaska-california).

Required

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Greater Friendship Baptist Church

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** ANC-02639

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 61.2099022

Longitude: -149.86637810000002

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Block 19D, Lot7A, Parcel # 003-114-11-000, Third Addition, Municipality of Anchorage.  
The church is bounded on the west by Ingra Street and on the south by East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire lot owned by the church.

---

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David Reamer

organization: N/A

street & number: 636 West 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue

city or town: Anchorage state: AK zip code: 99503

e-mail: dkreamerjr@alaska.edu

telephone: (512) 825-8402

date: March 22, 2018

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
 Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
 County and State



4819 Active Address  
 Public Road  
 One Way Road  
 Platted/Not-Built Public Road  
 Private Road  
 Private Road, 4WD Access  
 Driveway

Buildings  
 Parks  
 Military Boundary  
 Gate Preventing Through Access  
 Railroad Tracks

1 inch = 360 feet

Municipality of Anchorage  
 Addressing  
 addressing@muni.org  
 907.343.8466  
 4700 Elmora Road  
 P.O. Box 196650  
 Anchorage, AK 99519-6650



This map is derived from Geographic Information Systems data developed and maintained by the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). This map is not the official representation of any of the information included and is made available to the public solely for informational purposes. This map may be outdated, inaccurate and may omit important information. Do not rely on this information. The Municipality of Anchorage will not be liable for losses arising from errors, inaccuracies or omissions in the map.



Anchorage Bowl SW1332 13N03W17 15 Feb 2018

Vicinity Map

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Greater Friendship Baptist Church

City or Vicinity: Anchorage

County: Anchorage

State: AK

Photographer: David Reamer

Date Photographed: February 2, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0001)  
East façade, camera facing west.

Photo 2 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0002)  
North façade, camera facing south.

Photo 3 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0003)  
West façade, camera facing east.

Photo 4 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0004)  
South façade, camera facing north.

Photo 5 of 8. (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0005)  
Concrete slab inscribed with date and names of founding congregation, south façade, camera facing north.

Photo 6 of 8 (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0006)  
Church sanctuary, camera facing north.

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State

Photo 7 of 8 (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0007)  
Church sanctuary, camera facing south.

Photo 8 of 8 (AK\_Anchorage\_Greater Friendship Baptist Church\_0008)  
Interior of main entrance, camera facing west.

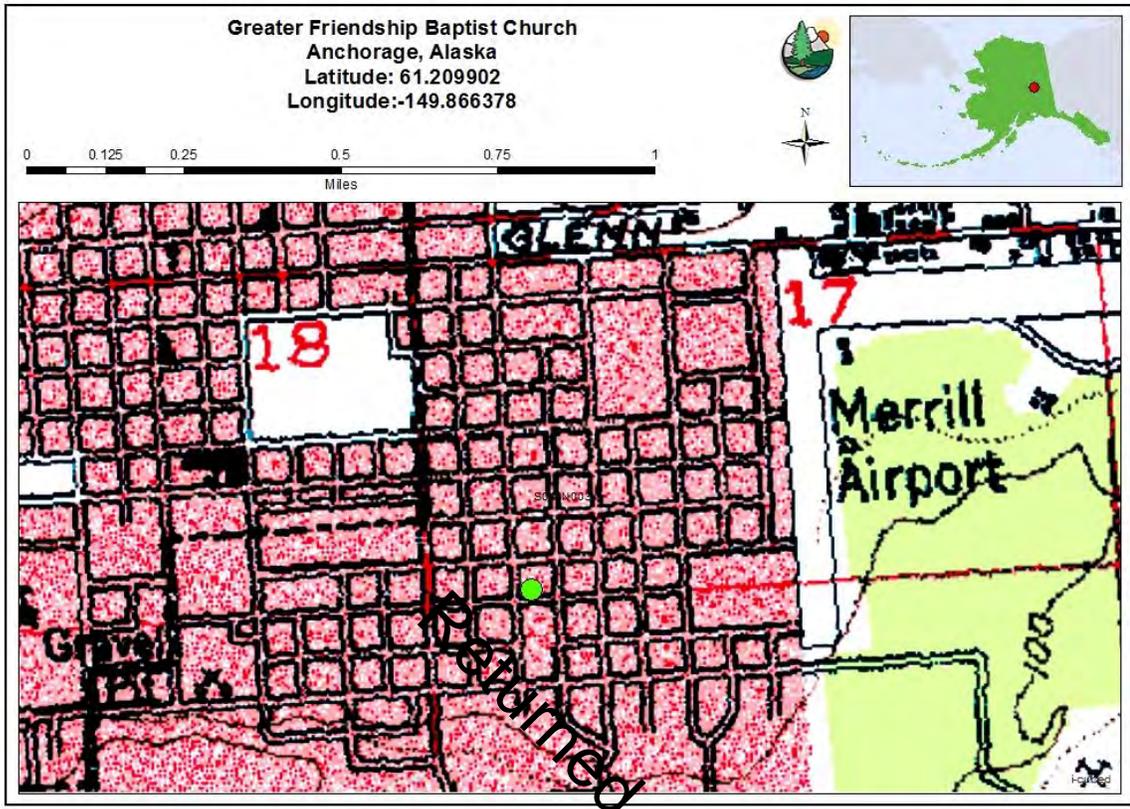
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Returned

Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Anchorage, AK  
County and State



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Greater Friendship Baptist Church

Multiple Name:

State & County: ALASKA, Anchorage

Date Received: 10/4/2018      Date of Pending List: 10/25/2018      Date of 16th Day: 11/9/2018      Date of 45th Day: 11/19/2018      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100003109

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL                | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource     | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG      |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      11/19/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: See Attached Comments

Recommendation/ Criteria RETURN

Reviewer Paul Lusignan      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229      Date 11/19/2018

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : **Yes**    see attached SLR : **No**

# **GREATER FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **Anchorage, Anchorage County, AK**

### **National Register Review Comments – Return**

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The nomination is being returned for substantive reasons. There are minor questions regarding physical changes to the building (circa 1977) and the impact of those changes on the historic integrity of the building. The current nomination falls short in providing sufficient context and justification for a national level of significance.

#### **Description/Integrity**

The building description notes that “Exterior changes include moving the location of the primary entrance from the southern façade to the south end of the east façade in 1977...” Are there historic photographs or further information regarding this alteration? Was the southern façade radically altered from its original character? Or were the changes more cosmetic to incorporate a more climate controlled entry? Did the entrance alteration impact the interior arrangement of spaces? As a rather modest architectural design the original entry sequence may have been a significant aspect of the building’s overall historic appearance.

#### **Significance**

Establishing and justifying a national level significance requires more than just outlining broad associations with important patterns of history. The current documentation does not provide adequate justification or contextual development to thoroughly understand the national importance of the Greater Friendship Baptist Church and its role in twentieth century social and religious history.

As written, the nomination provides sufficient evidence of local and state level significance in association with the congregation’s history as the first African American church established in Alaska, and its leadership role in the development of subsequent African American congregations in the state. This significance could be made stronger by augmenting the contextual discussion as it relates to such themes such as local African American heritage and the role of African American churches in the social and cultural development of local communities. The nomination points to these themes in noting, “From then to now, churches have been the constant center for Anchorage’s black community. Many of the pastors have been at the forefront in moments of community protest and celebration,” but the narrative lacks any real substantive discussion or elaboration of these themes. (See examples)

The justification of the church’s national significance on the other hand requires a much more robust discussion. While the fact that the congregation’s admission to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is noteworthy, elaboration on the larger context of those events is warranted. In particular, the discussion needs to address how the admission came into play and the national ramifications of that admission. What role did the Greater Friendship Baptist congregation have, if any, in directing SBC actions beyond 1951? How was the admission of Greater Friendship seen or promoted at the time? Is there evidence that the admission of Greater Friendship significantly altered the operations of the national convention, and was used as a catalyst for revisions to national policy? Or was it merely a minor event that went largely unnoticed by the parent organization. Some of that may reflect a lack of understanding (conveyed in the nomination) of the operational practices of the SBC and the role of local, state, or regional conventions. My understanding is that Greater Friendship’s admission was the result of actions taken by the Alaska state convention rather than a direct action by SBC headquarters and might be attributed largely to Alaska’s unique social attitudes and practices. Fully understanding the process and social/religious context is important to establishing the true national significance of the events.

continued

The nomination, if revised, should also consider elaborating on the broader history of the SBC, both pre-abolitionist era and after, the role of hierarchy within the organization, the evolution of SBC attitudes and practices (see Newman), and the role of the integrated military in local social interactions in Alaska during the period (according to Willoughby, "Fifteen of 17 charter members [of the Greater Friendship] were military personnel; the church itself started in 1943 after a revival led by chaplains stationed at nearby Elmendorf Air Force Base.")

The difference may be between achieving integration and affecting national policies with regard to issues of race and integration. National level significance is most often dependent upon revealing national impact. The current documentation is not strong in that aspect of justifying the identified themes.

The nomination should also clearly note that the events associated with the admission of the congregation into the SBC occurred prior to the completion of this building, and that the extant building reflects a later evolution of the congregation's development and activity in Anchorage. This is not the site of the events of 1951, but represents the later home of the congregation directly associated with those events.

Criteria Consideration A

The nomination fails to directly address National Register Criteria Consideration A.

(See example TN-Bethel Methodist Church-attached)

<http://www.bnnews.net/15240/southern-baptist-racial-barriers-broke-first-in-alaska-california>

<http://jsr.fsu.edu/2002/Reviews/moon.htm>

If you have specific questions regarding these comments please contact my office at 202-354-2229 or [paul\\_lusignan@nps.gov](mailto:paul_lusignan@nps.gov).



Paul Lusignan, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF PARKS & OUTDOOR RECREATION  
Office of History & Archaeology

550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1310  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565  
907.269.8721  
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha>

May 6, 2019

Re: 3330-2 Greater Friendship Baptist Church

Joy Beasley, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 7228  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Attn: Paul Lusignan

Dear Paul:

Enclosed are two disks that contain the true and correct copy of a revised National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Greater Friendship Baptist Church in Anchorage, Alaska. Office of History and Archaeology staff worked with members of the church and the individual who prepared the nomination and addressed your review comments made last November.

The principal changes include changing the level of significance to statewide, adding ethnic heritage: African-American as an area of significance, and addressing criteria consideration A more explicitly in the nomination. The church is nominated under criterion A, with criteria consideration A addressed, for a period of significance 1955-1967, and areas of significance including religion, ethnic heritage, and social history. I have signed the form.

Please contact me if you any questions regarding the revised nomination package.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joan M. Antonson".

Joan M. Antonson  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

enclosures: 2 disks with registration form, 2 maps, 8 photographs, Alaska Historical Commission and Municipality of Anchorage voting records, letter from church

Cc: Michael A. Bunton, Pastor, Greater Friendship Baptist Church, P.O. Box 203088, Anchorage, AK 99520-3088,  
[pastor-gbc@alaskan.com](mailto:pastor-gbc@alaskan.com)

Kristine Bunnell, Municipality of Anchorage, P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage, AK 99519-6650, [bunnellkr@muni.org](mailto:bunnellkr@muni.org)

