



Spotlight on our Denominations

American Baptist Church



WHO WE ARE...

Dates:

1609—John Smythe and other English Puritans form Baptist congregation in Amsterdam

1612—Thomas Helwys founds first Baptist church on English soil in Spitalfields, east London

1639—First American Baptist church is established by Roger Williams in Providence (colonized Rhode Island)

1890-91—Group of local Christians meet in homes and form First Baptist Church of Hot Springs

1920—First Baptist Church is officially federated with First Methodist and First Presbyterian Churches in Hot Springs

Numbers:

Worldwide—100 million having Baptist beliefs, including 47 million baptized Members

USA—32 million Baptists, including 14.5 million Southern Baptists; 8.4 million National Baptists; and 1.13 million American Baptists in 33 regions and 5,025 churches

Webpage: <https://www.abc-usa.org/>

WHAT WE BELIEVE...

Scripture:

The Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is the divinely inspired Word of God. No humanly devised confession or creed is accepted as binding. Rather, the standard Protestant biblical canon is recognized as the final written authority, trustworthy for faith and practice, which is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the community of faith.

God:

The One Sovereign Creator of the Bible is Lord of all, existing eternally in three persons as the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). This one, true God is most clearly revealed to us in the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus:

The eternal Son incarnate, fully God and fully man, was conceived and born of the virgin Mary, died on the cross for our sins, rose bodily from the grave, ascended into heaven, and will come again in glory to judge us all.

Salvation:

We are saved by grace when God imputes to us his gift of righteousness through faith alone (*sola fide*) in Christ, who died and rose again for our sins. Salvation (forgiveness of sins, release from guilt and condemnation, and reconciliation with God) and eternal life are granted by grace to all who trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Good works are the inevitable result of true faith, but in no way are the basis for our right standing before God.

Death:

The souls of believers upon dying go immediately to be with Christ. At Christ's return, their bodies are raised to immortal, eternal life. The wicked will suffer eternal punishment in hell.

The Church:

The Church (universal) is the body of Christ, which consists of the redeemed throughout history. The term "church" usually refers to local congregations, each of which is autonomous (practicing congregational polity), whose members are to be baptized believers and whose officers are pastors and deacons. Churches may form associations or conventions for cooperative purposes, especially missions and education.

WHAT WE BELIEVE (Continued)...

Ordinances:

Referred to as “sacraments” by many denominations, ordinances are considered to represent “obedience to commands that Christ has given us,” and consist of believer’s baptism by immersion (as a symbol of one’s faith in Christ) and the Lord’s Supper (as a symbolic memorial of Christ’s death and anticipation of His return).

Beliefs:

American Baptists emphasize evangelism, discipleship, and missions, as well as religious liberty and freedom of conscience, security of the believer, and separation of Church and state. In general, Baptists consist of both Arminian and Calvinist believers, with the former being more prevalent.

THINGS WE DO...

LOCALLY

Through our local Baptist Denomination, we support:

- Central Baptist University
- Dakota New Church Plan
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Regional Mission Budget
- United Baptist Mission Basic (ABCUSA)
- University of Sioux Falls

Through our American Baptist Women’s Ministries, we support:

- National AB Women’s Ministries
- National AB Women’s Ministries—Refit Fund (for missionaries and church planters)
- Specially designated Love Offerings
- White Cross Association

Through The United Churches, we also support the:

- Basic Needs Boutique
- Barely Used Boutique
- Food Pantry of Hot Springs
- Foreign Mission Efforts
- Hot Springs Ministerial Association
- Other Area-wide Mission Efforts

For further information regarding ABC of the Dakotas:
[ABC Dakotas Home](#)

THINGS WE DO (Continued)...

REGIONALLY / NATIONALLY / INTERNATIONALLY

Through American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), our United Baptist Mission Basic support is distributed to:

- Regional Ministry (65%) —including ABC of the Dakotas (ND/SD)
- and Camp Judson
- ABCUSA (26%)
- Global and National Ministry (5%)
- Ministry Partners (4%)

ABCUSA, in turn, provides trusted management and distribution of funds from and to its member churches and other entities, with administration/oversight of its ministries, societies, services, and organizations, including the following:

- American Baptist Home Mission Societies
- International Ministries (AB Foreign Mission Society)
- MMBB (Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board) Financial Services
- Regional Ministries (including Camps)
- Associated Ministry Organizations
- Related Organizations

For further information regarding ABCUSA:

<https://www.abc-usa.org/how-we-serve/all-abc-ministries/>

ABC of the Dakotas, in turn, provides trusted management and distribution of funds from and to ABCUSA and its member churches, with administration/oversight of its services and ministries, including the following:

- Camp, Prison, Multicultural, and Church Plant Ministries
- Loans to churches
- Mission Support and Holy Cow Project
- Regional events for pastors and churches
- Representation to regional and national church councils
- Search and Call Assistance, Conflict Management, Clergy Support

HOW TO JOIN...

Prerequisites

- Have come to know and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and have received Him into your heart and life as Lord.
- Have been or are willing to be baptized.
- Have prayed about and decided which one of the three denominations God would have you join. (Yes, you have to choose one of the three.)

Process

- Talk to the Pastor about your desire to join, discussing your personal faith in Christ, the details of baptism, and the desired mode of membership: public profession of faith, certificate/letter of transfer, or statement and reaffirmation of faith.
- Commit to attending a Membership Class.
- Discuss and decide on a worship service (usually on a Sunday morning) to join the church
- Meet with the Pastor, Board of Trustees, and relevant denominational leader(s) prior to the designated worship service (as the Trustees and denominational leaders are responsible for referring prospective members to the congregation of The United Churches).

Procedure

- Come forward at the appropriate time in the worship service and stand with the Pastor.
- Respond positively to the following:

Question 1: Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of the Living God, and have you received Him as your personal Savior and Lord of your life? Do you, and have you?

Answer 1: *I do, and I have.*

Question 2: Are you willing to rely on God's saving and sustaining grace to strengthen you in your life of faith in Christ in whatever way God is calling you; and do you renounce evil and commit yourself to trying to live a life that is pleasing to God from now on? Are you, and do you?

Answer 2: *I am, and I do.*

Question 3: Do you promise to participate actively in the worship services of our church, responsibly utilizing your time, talents and treasures in supporting the ministry and mission of our church family? Do you?

Answer 3: *I do.*

HOW TO JOIN (Continued)...

- Listen to your church family's response as the Pastor asks the Congregation: Do we members of The United Churches accept and welcome **[Your Name]** into our church family, and will we support, befriend, encourage, and pray for them as a beloved brother/sister in Christ and pledge to treat as such in the life and work of this family of faith? **Do we, and will we? We do, and we will.**
- Listen as the Pastor declares:
We welcome you in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, into the family of your denomination and The United Churches of Hot Springs, conferring to you all the rights and responsibilities congruent with your membership.
- Join the Pastor in the foyer at the conclusion of the worship service in order to greet and be welcomed by fellow church members.

Perks to Receive

- Church Connects Us with God and Gives us an Opportunity to Worship Him.
- Church Gives Us a Chance to Reflect on Gratitude.
- Church Connects Us Socially.
- Church Helps Us Better Connect with our Spouse and other Family Members.
- Church Gives Us the Opportunity to Receive Encouragement from Others in Our Church Family.
- Church Allows Us to Feel Reverence.
- Church Provides Plenty of Opportunities to Give Back.
- Church Helps "Find the Lesson" in our Trials.
- Church Teaches Us Forgiveness.
- Church Fills Our Hearts with Song.
- Church is Where We "Find Our Purpose" and Find Deeper Meaning in our Lives.
- Church Membership Gives Us the Privilege of Participating and Voting in Elections and Other Business Affairs of Our Denomination and of The United Churches.

Promises to Keep

- Attend worship services regularly.
- Study the Word of God through Bible study.
- Encourage one another.
- Pray for one another and for the needs of our community, country, and world
- Give intentionally and generously of your time, talents, and treasures to further God's kingdom here on earth through His church.

WHAT'S OUR HISTORY...

Date:

1609—In **Amsterdam, Dutch Republic**, John Smythe, along with Thomas Helwys and other English Puritan Separatists, form what is generally considered to be the **first Baptist congregation**.

1612—In **Spitalfields, east London**, Thomas Helwys founds **first Baptist church on English soil (but baptism by immersion was not widely practiced in English Baptist churches until 1640)**.

1638—In **Providence, (then-uncolonized) RI**, Roger Williams establishes **first Baptist church in North America**.

~1638—In **Newport, (then-uncolonized) RI**, John Clarke begins establishment of **second Baptist church in America, the first to practice baptism by immersion (by 1644)**.

1814—The **Triennial Convention** forms as the **first national Baptist organization in the United States**.

1832—With the Triennial Convention as precursor, the **American Baptist Home Mission Society is founded (now the American Baptist Board of National Ministries)**.

1845—Because of the ominous slavery issue, the **American Baptist Home Mission Society decides separate northern (Triennial) and southern conventions are necessary**, resulting in continuation of Northern Baptist societies and formation of the Southern Baptist Convention.

1890-91—In **Hot Springs, SD**, a group of local Christians have home meetings and form **First Baptist Church**.

1892—In **Hot Springs, SD**, **First Baptist Church building is completed** at corner of Albany Ave. and 16th Street.

1907—In Washington DC, **Northern Baptist Convention is formed from various remaining organized Northern Baptist societies, representing what will become ABCUSA**.

1920—In **Hot Springs, SD**, members of **First Baptist, First Methodist, and First Presbyterian Churches** (with Christian Church also included for first 2-3 years) **officially federate on December 5, to become The United Churches of Hot Springs**.

1950—The **Northern Baptist Convention is renamed the American Baptist Convention**.

1954—In **Hot Springs, SD**, congregation of **The United Churches worships for first time in their new building at 342 N. Garden Street on April 15**.

1972—The **American Baptist Convention is renamed American Baptist Churches USA (with offices in PA)**.

Some Information about Baptists and Our American Baptist Denomination within The United Churches of Hot Springs



Our local Baptist denomination, formed in 1891 and formally federated with local Methodist and Presbyterian congregations in 1920, is composed of Christians who believe in justification or salvation by grace, through faith—not through good deeds, based on the Apostle Paul’s statement in Ephesians 2:8-9: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (NIV)

Among other doctrines, Baptists believe in the original sin of Adam; the Trinity; the virgin birth of Christ; atonement of sins through the death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus; the need for salvation through belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, his death and resurrection; the importance of evangelism (The Great Commission) and discipleship; the literal Second Coming of Christ; the authority of the inspired Word of God; security of the believer; religious liberty and freedom of conscience; and separation of church and state.

As a Baptist community of faith, we view believer’s baptism by immersion as having the strongest scriptural support and, therefore, favor that mode of baptism. However, we in our federated church family embrace fellowship with faithful followers of Christ who have experienced other traditional modes of baptism.

Despite the association of the name “Baptist” with the words “baptize” and “baptism,” Baptists emphasize personal spiritual accountability, with repentance and acceptance of Christ as personal Lord and Savior—rather than baptism—as the determining factor for salvation and admittance into Heaven.

Upon baptism, candidates may be received into membership by profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord.

Those who previously were members of another church may be accepted into Baptist membership by transfer of letter or certificate, if available, from that church.

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In the event a letter or certificate of transfer is not attainable, an individual may also be received into membership by statement/reaffirmation of Christian faith.

Baptists generally observe two ordinances: believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper (communion). These ordinances are considered to represent "obedience to commands that Christ has given us." Many denominations, instead, refer to communion and baptism as "sacraments," with "Jesus' body and blood spiritually present" in communion and with baptism representing "a sign of the new covenant." Some denominations even believe sacraments represent "activities God uses to impart salvation or a means of grace to the participant." Baptists, on the other hand, consider that no saving grace is conveyed by either ordinance and traditionally believe the ordinances to be symbols—with baptism being symbolic of one's faith in Christ and the Lord's Supper being a symbolic memorial of Christ's death and anticipation of his return.

Instead of presenting their offspring for infant baptism, parents in the Baptist tradition often choose to bring their babies forward for child dedication.

The governance (ecclesiastical polity) of Baptist churches generally follows the congregational tradition (in contrast to episcopal, presbyterian, or connexional forms of polity). That is, emphasis is placed on democracy among members, autonomy (independence) of the local church body, and absence of hierarchy among the clergy. Therefore, we have pastor and deacons, only, without ruling elders, bishop, superintendent, etc. Although we are part of the American Baptist Churches USA and American Baptist Churches of the Dakotas—neither exerts governmental control over our local body.

Although we have a baptistry within our church building (located adjacent to the Bethany Room Welcome Center), it is not operational, and most folks undergoing baptism by immersion in recent years have chosen to be baptized in Fall River, near Brookside Park.

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