

The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church **The African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion) Church**

The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church is the first independent Protestant denomination of African American origin. With 2.5–3.5 million members, it is one of the largest Methodist denominations in the world. AME Zion has approximately 1.5 million members.

- **Origins:** AME was founded in 1816 by Richard Allen and other Black Methodists in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They had previously been members of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church but were forced to worship in a segregated gallery. AME Zion, led by James Varick, emerged in New York City in 1821.
- **Early Struggles:** Faced significant discrimination and faced opposition from white-dominated denominations.
- **Social and Political Impact:** Played a crucial role in the abolition of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement.
- **Note:** The AME and AME Zion Churches continue to be a significant force in American society, playing a vital role in the spiritual, social, and political lives of its members and communities.

More info: <https://www.ame-church.com/>. <https://amez.org/our-church/>.

Core Beliefs:

- **Trinity:** Belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the one God.
- **Scripture:** The Bible as the inspired word of God.
- **Salvation:** Salvation is received through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Social Justice:** Strong emphasis on social justice and the importance of addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and racial discrimination.

Practices and Rituals:

- **Worship Services:** Services are often characterized by energetic worship, with singing, dancing, and preaching.
- **Sacraments:** Baptism and Holy Communion are considered sacraments.
- **Sunday School:** Provides religious education for all ages.
- **Community Outreach:** Active involvement in community service and social justice initiatives.

Places of Worship:

- **Churches:** Local churches are the primary centers of worship and community life.

Leadership Structure:

- **Episcopal:** Governed by a hierarchy of bishops, with a General Conference as the highest governing body.
- **Elected Bishops:** Bishops are elected by the General Conference.

Main Symbols:

- **Cross:** The cross remains a central symbol of Christian faith.
- **The Flame:** Symbolizing the Holy Spirit and the transformative power of the Gospel.