

## Southern Baptist

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is the largest Protestant denomination in the United States with about 13 million members. The denomination was officially founded in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia. Since then, the Southern Baptist Convention has grown significantly and has played a major role in American religious and cultural life.

**Core Beliefs:** Southern Baptists share many core Christian beliefs, such as the belief in one God, the Holy Trinity, and Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of humanity. They believe that the Trinity is made up of three distinct persons but one being. The Bible, comprising the Old and New Testaments, is regarded as the inspired and inerrant word of God and is central to the Church's teachings. Southern Baptists emphasize the importance of personal conversion and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. They believe that justification is by faith alone, meaning no one is saved by their works; rather, salvation comes through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, which is initiated by the Holy Spirit convicting individuals of their sin. Through the priesthood of all believers, every Christian has direct access to God through Jesus Christ, without the need for a human mediator, and is called to serve and minister within the Church. The autonomy of the local church to make decisions for their respective congregation. Key doctrines are summarized in the Baptist Faith and Message.

*More info:* <https://bfm.sbc.net/preamble/>

**Practices and Rituals:** Worship in Southern Baptist churches is centered around preaching, prayer, and congregational singing. Key practices include:

1. **Baptism:** Baptism by immersion is practiced as a public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ and is a prerequisite for church membership.
2. **The Lord's Supper (Communion):** this regularly celebrated ordinance commemorates Jesus' death and is an act of remembrance and reflection.
3. **Evangelism and Missions:** Southern Baptists carry out evangelism and missionary work to fulfill the Great Commission to spread the gospel. They do so through organized local and global outreach programs, including door-to-door evangelism, community service projects, church planting, and supporting missionaries worldwide
4. **Bible Study:** Personal and group Bible study is strongly encouraged through Sunday School and other small group ministries to promote spiritual growth.

**Places of Worship:** Southern Baptist churches vary widely in architectural style but are typically designed to accommodate large congregations and focus on functionality. Worship spaces often include a pulpit, a baptismal pool, and areas for fellowship and Bible study. Many churches have facilities for educational and recreational activities that reflect the denomination's emphasis on community and family life.

**Leadership and Clergy:** The Southern Baptist Convention operates with a congregational governance structure, which means each local church is autonomous and self-governing. Pastors lead local congregations, conduct services, administer ordinances, and provide pastoral care. Churches may also have deacons who assist in various ministries. The SBC itself is a cooperative body that provides resources, support, and coordination for missions, education, and other shared endeavors. Ministers typically undergo theological education and training to prepare for their responsibilities.

*More info:* <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/sbc-life-articles/local-church-autonomy/>

**Holy Days and Festivals:** While Southern Baptists observe traditional Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter, which celebrate the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ, they do not follow a liturgical calendar. Instead, they focus on regular worship services, special revival meetings, and events such as Vacation Bible School and mission trips that strengthen their capacity for evangelism and deeper discipleship.

**Symbols and Icons:** Southern Baptists avoid the use of religious icons and focus instead on the centrality of the Bible and the cross. The cross is the most important symbol as it represents the sacrifice of Christ and His role as Savior. Baptismal services and the Lord's Supper are key symbolic acts that highlight core beliefs about salvation and remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice. The use of contemporary worship music and modern technology in services are good examples of the denomination's adaptive approach to worship and outreach.

*More info:* <https://www.worshiplibrary.com/blog/an-overview-of-worship-in-the-southern-baptist-convention/>