

The American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA)

The American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) is a Protestant Christian denomination with a diverse membership and a long history of social justice advocacy.

- **Roots:** The ABCUSA traces its roots to the First Baptist Church in America, founded in 1638 by Roger Williams in Providence, Rhode Island.
- **Formation:** The modern ABCUSA was formed in 1907 as the Northern Baptist Convention, reflecting its origins in the northern states of the United States. It later changed its name to the American Baptist Convention and then to the American Baptist Churches USA.
- **Membership:** The ABCUSA has approximately 1.3 million members.

More info: <https://www.abc-usa.org/>.

Core Beliefs:

- **Trinity:** Belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the one God.
- **Scripture:** The Bible as the inspired word of God, though not without error.
- **Salvation:** Salvation is received through grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Baptism:** Believers' baptism by immersion.
- **Church Autonomy:** Emphasis on the autonomy of local churches.

Differences from Other Protestant Churches:

- **Diversity:** The ABCUSA is known for its diversity, with a wide range of theological perspectives and worship styles.
- **Social Justice Emphasis:** A strong commitment to social justice and addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental concerns.
- **Historically Progressive:** The ABCUSA has a history of progressive social stances, including support for women's ordination and LGBTQ+ rights.

Practices and Rituals:

- **Worship Services:** Worship services vary widely, reflecting the diversity of the denomination.
- **Sacraments:** Baptism and the Lord's Supper (communion) are considered sacraments.
- **Sunday School:** Provides religious education for all ages.
- **Social Justice Advocacy:** Active involvement in social justice issues through advocacy, volunteer work, and community outreach.

Leadership Structure:

- **Congregational:** Each congregation is autonomous and self-governing.
- **Regional Conferences:** The ABCUSA is organized into regional conferences that provide support and resources to local churches.
- **General Board:** The highest governing body of the denomination.

Main Symbols:

- **Cross:** The cross remains a central symbol of Christian faith.
- **The Open Bible:** Symbolizing the importance of Scripture in their faith and practice.