American Church Denominations

The major Protestant church bodies in the United States. Membership figures are rounded from each body's own latest report.

CHURCH BODY	FOUNDED	WHERE	HOW IT WAS FORMED	U.S. MEMBERS	WOMEN AS PASTORS	MARRIAGE
MAINLINE PROTESTANT CHURCHES						
1 **United Methodist** Methodist tradition	1968	Dallas, Texas	Union of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church; roots in the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1784.	About 4.2 million U.S. members (2023), after about 7,600 churches left in 2019–2023	Yes, since 1956	Since 2024, clergy may perform same-sex weddings; each church decides
2 **ELCA** Lutheran tradition	1988	Columbus, Ohio (constituting convention, 1987); offices in Chicago	Union of the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.	About 2.7 million baptized members (2024)	Yes, since 1970 (in its parent churches)	Since 2009, allows pastors in same-sex relationships; congregations may bless same-sex marriages
3 **Episcopal** Anglican tradition	1789	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; offices in New York City	Organized after the American Revolution from the Church of England in the colonies.	About 1.4 million members (2025)	Yes, priests since 1976; bishops since 1989	Since 2015, marriage rites for same-sex couples
4 **PC(USA)** Reformed tradition	1983	Atlanta, Georgia; offices in Louisville, Kentucky	Reunion of the northern United Presbyterian Church and the southern Presbyterian Church in the U.S., divided since 1861.	About 1.05 million members (2024)	Yes, elders since 1930, ministers since 1956	Since 2015, defines marriage as between "two people"
5 **American Baptist** Baptist tradition	1907	Washington, D.C. (as the Northern Baptist Convention); offices near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania	Continues the northern Baptist mission societies after the southern churches left in 1845; renamed in 1950 and 1972.	About 1.1 million members (its own estimate)	Yes	2005 statement: homosexual practice is incompatible with Christian teaching; each church is self-governing
6 **UCC** Congregational tradition	1957	Cleveland, Ohio	Union of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church.	About 666,000 members (2024)	Yes; Antoinette Brown, ordained 1853, was the first in America	Since 2005, affirms same-sex marriage
7 **Disciples of Christ** Restoration tradition	1968	Kansas City (restructured as a denomination); offices in Indianapolis, Indiana	Grew from the Stone-Campbell movement (1832); separated from the Churches of Christ (1906) and the independent Christian Churches (1968).	About 250,000 members (2020s)	Yes, since 1888	Since 2013, welcomes all regardless of sexual orientation; each church decides on weddings
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CHURCHES						
8 **Southern Baptist** Baptist tradition	1845	Augusta, Georgia; offices in Nashville, Tennessee	Formed by southern Baptists who left the Triennial Convention.	About 12.3 million members (2025)	The office of pastor is limited to men (Baptist Faith and Message 2000)	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
9 **Missouri Synod** Lutheran tradition	1847	Chicago, Illinois; offices in St. Louis, Missouri	Founded by German Lutheran immigrants (the Saxons of Perry County, Missouri, and others).	About 1.7 million baptized members (2020s)	No; pastors are men	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
10 **PCA** Reformed tradition	1973	Birmingham, Alabama; offices in Lawrenceville, Georgia	Formed by conservative churches that left the southern Presbyterian Church in the U.S.	About 400,000 members (2024)	No; elders and ministers are men	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman

Scripture quoted from the King James Version

American Church Denominations (continued)

The major Protestant church bodies in the United States. Membership figures are rounded from each body's own latest report.

CHURCH BODY	FOUNDED	WHERE	HOW IT WAS FORMED	U.S. MEMBERS	WOMEN AS PASTORS	MARRIAGE
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CHURCHES						
11 **ACNA** Anglican tradition	2009	Bedford, Texas	Formed by parishes and dioceses that left the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.	About 1,000 congregations (its own report)	Bishops are men; each diocese decides on women priests	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
12 **Global Methodist** Methodist tradition	2022	Launched May 1, 2022	Formed by traditional Methodists, largely congregations that left the United Methodist Church.	More than 4,000 congregations (its own report)	Yes	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
13 **Assemblies of God** Pentecostal tradition	1914	Hot Springs, Arkansas; offices in Springfield, Missouri	A fellowship of Pentecostal ministers and churches from the Azusa Street revival.	About 3.05 million adherents (2024)	Yes, women have been credentialed as ministers from its early years	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
14 **Churches of Christ** Restoration tradition	1906	Southern and central United States (first listed separately in the 1906 census)	The conservative, a cappella branch of the Stone-Campbell movement.	About 1 million members	No; elders and preachers are men	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
15 **Nazarene** Holiness tradition	1908	Pilot Point, Texas; offices in Lenexa, Kansas	Union of holiness churches from the West, the East and the South.	About 600,000 members in the U.S. and Canada; about 2.6 million worldwide	Yes, from its founding	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
16 **Seventh-day Adventist** Adventist tradition	1863	Battle Creek, Michigan; world offices in Silver Spring, Maryland	Organized by Sabbath-keeping Adventists after the Millerite movement.	About 1.2 million members in North America	Women are not ordained as pastors by the world church (2015 vote)	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
17 **Nondenominational** Nondenominational tradition	1960s–today	Across America (Calvary Chapel: Costa Mesa, California, 1965)	Independent congregations and networks such as Calvary Chapel (1965) and the Vineyard (1982).	Millions of Americans; the fastest-growing group of Protestants	Varies by church	Most hold that marriage is the union of one man and one woman
HISTORICALLY BLACK PROTESTANT CHURCHES						
18 **National Baptist** Baptist tradition	1895	Atlanta, Georgia; offices in Nashville, Tennessee	Union of three Black Baptist conventions for missions and education.	Reports several million members	Each church decides; most pastors are men	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
19 **Church of God in Christ** Pentecostal tradition	1897 (Pentecostal from 1907)	Lexington, Mississippi; headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee	Founded as a holiness church; reorganized as Pentecostal after the Azusa Street revival.	Reports several million members	Women serve as missionaries and evangelists; pastors are men	Marriage is the union of one man and one woman
20 **AME** Methodist tradition	1816	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Formed by Black Methodists led by Richard Allen, after discrimination at St. George's Methodist Church.	Reports about 2.5 million members worldwide	Yes; its first woman bishop was elected in 2000	2004 General Conference: marriage between a man and a woman

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." **Jude 1:3 (KJV)**

Scripture quoted from the King James Version

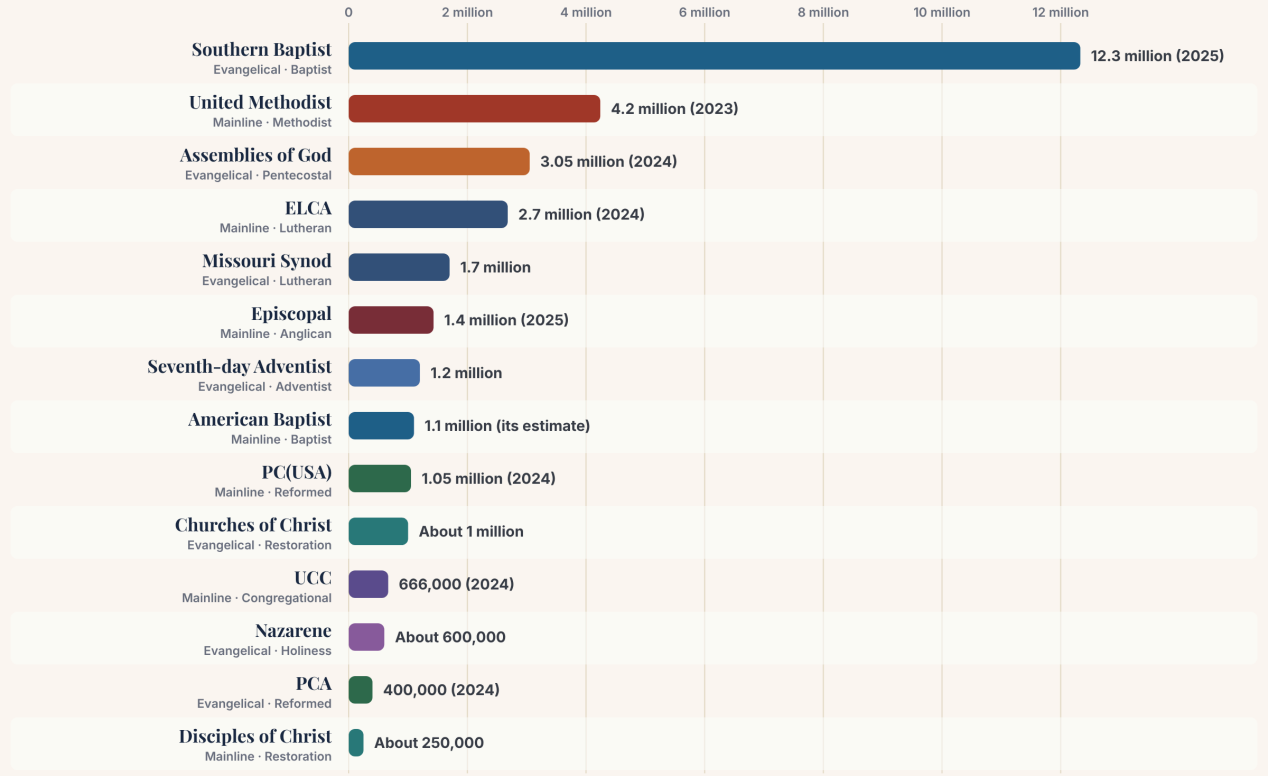
How Large Is Each Church Body?

The major Protestant church bodies in the United States. Membership figures are rounded from each body's own latest report.

RESOURCES · AMERICAN CHURCH DENOMINATIONS

How Large Is Each Church Body?

Members in the United States, as reported by each church body (rounded)



From each body's latest report (years shown). Churches count members differently, so compare general sizes only.
Not shown: National Baptist, Church of God in Christ and AME (each reports several million), ACNA, Global Methodist and nondenominational churches.

Scripture quoted from the King James Version

How Today's Church Bodies Formed

The major Protestant church bodies in the United States. Membership figures are rounded from each body's own latest report.

RESOURCES · AMERICAN CHURCH DENOMINATIONS

How Today's Church Bodies Formed

Mergers, splits and new beginnings in each family of American churches

Methodist

- 1784 — Methodist Episcopal Church (Baltimore)
- 1816 — AME Church forms (Philadelphia)
- 1845 — Split north and south over slavery
- 1939 — Reunited as The Methodist Church
- 1968 — United Methodist Church (with the EUB)
- 2022 — Global Methodist Church forms

Lutheran

- 1847 — Missouri Synod founded (Chicago)
- 1960–62 — ALC and LCA formed by mergers
- 1976 — AELC leaves the Missouri Synod
- 1988 — ELCA formed from ALC, LCA and AELC
- 2010 — North American Lutheran Church forms

Presbyterian

- 1789 — First General Assembly (Philadelphia)
- 1861 — Southern church forms at the Civil War
- 1973 — PCA forms (Birmingham)
- 1983 — PC(USA): north and south reunite
- 2012 — ECO forms

Baptist

- 1814 — Triennial Convention (Philadelphia)
- 1845 — Southern Baptist Convention (Augusta)
- 1895 — National Baptist Convention (Atlanta)
- 1907 — Northern Baptist Convention
- 1972 — Renamed American Baptist Churches USA

Congregational and Reformed

- 1620 — Pilgrim church at Plymouth
- 1931 — Congregational Christian Churches
- 1934 — Evangelical and Reformed Church
- 1957 — United Church of Christ (Cleveland)

Anglican

- 1607 — Church of England at Jamestown
- 1789 — Episcopal Church organized
- 2009 — Anglican Church in North America forms

Restoration

- 1832 — Stone and Campbell movements unite
- 1906 — Churches of Christ listed separately
- 1968 — Disciples restructure; independent Christian Churches

Pentecostal and Holiness

- 1906 — Azusa Street revival (Los Angeles)
- 1907 — Church of God in Christ (Memphis)
- 1908 — Church of the Nazarene (Pilot Point)
- 1914 — Assemblies of God (Hot Springs)

Founded · Merger · Split or new body · Renamed or reorganized

Scripture quoted from the King James Version