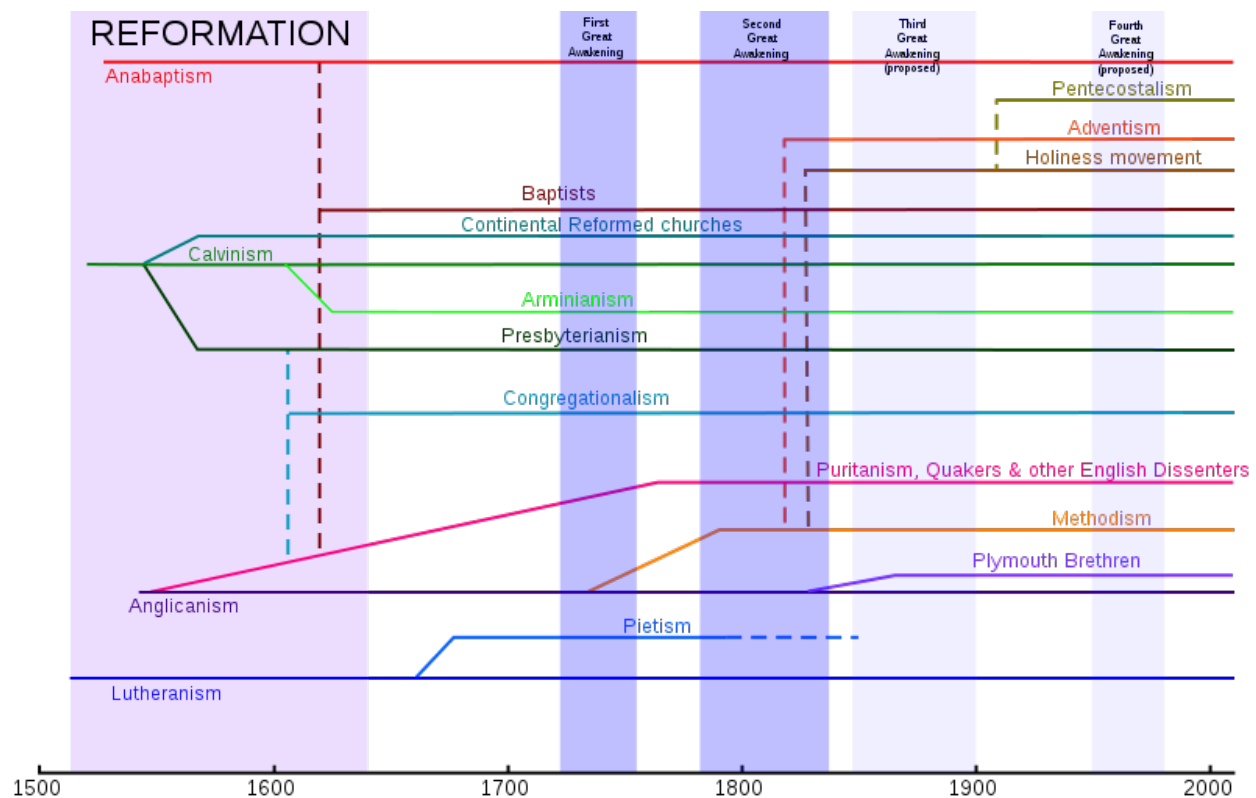


DENOMINATIONS

Definition: A **Christian denomination** is a distinct [religious](#) body within [Christianity](#), identified by traits such as a name, organization, leadership and doctrine.

The [Catholic Church](#), the largest Christian denomination with roughly 1.2 billion members—slightly over half of all Christians worldwide—is the world's second largest [religious denomination](#) after [Sunni Islam](#). However, the Catholic Church does not view itself as a denomination, but as the original pre-denominational church. This view is rejected by other Christian denominations. [Protestant denominations](#) account for approximately 37 percent of Christians worldwide. Together, Catholicism and Protestantism (including [Anglicanism](#), and other denominations sharing historical ties) comprise [Western Christianity](#). Western Christian denominations prevail in [Western](#), [Northern](#), [Central](#) and [Southern Europe](#), [Sub-Saharan Africa](#), the [Americas](#) and [Oceania](#).

Here is a graph that shows where the denominations came from:



The Denominations that we are going to study are within the community of Gardendale. We want to understand what makes us different. Although there are many forms of Baptists, Methodists, and Pentecostals we are going to focus on one main branch of those denominations. Just because we have these names listed under our denominations does not make them Christian as we will see. We will begin by understanding where these denominations came from and then

we will begin to look at different doctrines and what each denomination believes. There are some important differences and some less than important differences.

Baptist (Southern) - The **Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)** is a [Christian denomination](#) based in the [United States](#). It is the world's largest [Baptist](#) denomination and the largest [Protestant](#) body in the United States, with over 15 million members as of 2015.- The word *Southern* in Southern Baptist Convention stems from it having been founded and rooted in the [Southern United States](#), following a split from [northern Baptists](#) over the issue of slavery; the immediate issue was whether slave owners could serve as missionaries. Members at a regional convention held in [Augusta, Georgia](#), created the SBC in 1845. After the [American Civil War](#), another split occurred when most [freedmen](#) set up independent congregations. Southern Baptists emphasize the significance of the individual conversion experience which is affirmed by the person having [complete immersion](#) in water for a [believer's baptism](#). As a result, they reject the practice of [infant baptism](#). SBC churches are [evangelical](#) in doctrine and practice. Specific beliefs based on biblical interpretation can vary somewhat due to their [congregational polity](#) which allows autonomy to each individual local church. Southern Baptists adhere to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Church of God - Church of God is a name used by numerous, mostly unrelated Christian denominational bodies, most of which descend from Pentecostal, Holiness, 7th Day Baptist and Adventist traditions. The largest denomination with this name is the Pentecostal [Church of God \(Cleveland, Tennessee\)](#) with over seven million members in over 170 countries. First called the Pentecostal Assemblies of USA, the PCG was formed in [Chicago, Illinois](#) in 1919 by a group of Pentecostal ministers who had chosen not to affiliate with the [Assemblies of God](#) and several who had left that organization after it adopted a doctrinal statement in 1916. John C. Sinclair, an early Pentecostal pastor in Chicago, and a former Assemblies of God presbyter served as the first moderator. The Pentecostal Assemblies of the USA was dissolved in 1922, and the organization resumed under the name Pentecostal Church of God. The Church of God adheres to the Pentecostal and Evangelical Statements of Faith.

Methodist (United) - **Methodism**, or the **Methodist movement**, is a group of historically related [denominations](#) of [Protestant Christianity](#) which derive their inspiration from the life and teachings of [John Wesley](#). [George Whitefield](#) and John's brother [Charles Wesley](#) were also significant leaders in the movement. It originated as a [revival](#) within the 18th century [Church of England](#) and became a separate [Church](#) after Wesley's death (1791). Because of vigorous [missionary work](#),^[3] the movement spread throughout the [British Empire](#), the [United States](#) and beyond, today claiming approximately 80 million adherents worldwide. Initially, the Methodists merely sought reform within the Church of England ([Anglicanism](#)), but the movement gradually departed from that church. The Anglican Church in the American colonies most often distanced itself from the movement, often citing George Whitefield's explicit rejection of Anglican doctrine, resulting in his being banned from most if not all Anglican churches. Methodists adhere to Wesley's Articles of Religion, the Apostles Creed, and the Nicene Creed.

Lutheran - Lutheranism is a major branch of [Protestant Christianity](#) which identifies with the [theology](#) of [Martin Luther](#) (1483-1546), a [German friar](#), [ecclesiastical](#) reformer and theologian. Luther's efforts to reform the theology and practice of the [Catholic Church](#) launched the [Protestant Reformation](#) in the German-speaking territories of the [Holy Roman Empire](#). Beginning with [the Ninety-Five Theses](#), first published in 1517, Luther's writings were disseminated internationally, spreading the early ideas of the Reformation beyond the influence and control of the [Roman Curia](#) and the [Holy Roman Emperor](#). The split between the Lutherans and the Catholics was made public and clear with the 1521 [Edict of Worms](#): the edicts of the Diet condemned Luther and officially banned citizens of the [Holy Roman Empire](#) from defending or propagating his ideas, subjecting advocates of Lutheranism to forfeiture of all property, half of the seized property to be forfeit to the imperial government and the remaining half forfeit to the party who brought the accusation. The divide centered primarily on two points: the proper source of authority in the church, often called the *formal principle* of the Reformation, and the doctrine of [justification](#), often called the *material principle*. Most Lutheran churches adhere to The Book of Concord.

Presbyterian - Presbyterianism is a part of the [Reformed tradition](#) within [Protestantism](#) which traces its origins to the [British Isles](#), particularly [Scotland](#). Presbyterian churches derive their name from the [presbyterian](#) form of [church government](#), which is governed by representative assemblies of [elders](#). A great number of Reformed churches are organized this way, but the word *Presbyterian*, when capitalised, is often applied uniquely to churches that trace their roots to the Scottish and English Presbyterians, as well as several [English dissenter](#) groups that formed during the [English Civil War](#). Presbyterian theology typically emphasizes the sovereignty of God, the [authority of the Scriptures](#), and the necessity of [grace](#) through faith in Christ. Presbyterian church government was ensured in Scotland by the [Acts of Union](#) in 1707 which created the [Kingdom of Great Britain](#). The roots of Presbyterianism lie in the [Protestant Reformation](#) of the 16th century; the example of John Calvin's [Geneva](#) being particularly influential. Presbyterians adhere to the Book of Confessions and most follow the Book of Order.

Pentecostal - Pentecostalism or **Classical Pentecostalism** (initially known as the **Revivalist Movement**) is a renewal movement within [Protestant](#)^[2] [Christianity](#) that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of [God](#) through the [baptism with the Holy Spirit](#). The term *Pentecostal* is derived from [Pentecost](#), the [Greek](#) name for the [Jewish Feast of Weeks](#). For Christians, this event commemorates the descent of the [Holy Spirit](#) upon the followers of [Jesus Christ](#), as described in the second chapter of the [Book of Acts](#). Pentecostalism emerged in the early 20th century among radical adherents of the [Holiness movement](#) who were energized by [revivalism](#) and expectation for the imminent [Second Coming of Christ](#). Believing that they were living in the [end times](#), they expected God to spiritually renew the [Christian Church](#) thereby bringing to pass the [restoration](#) of spiritual gifts and the [evangelization](#) of the world. In 1900, [Charles Parham](#), an American evangelist and [faith healer](#), began teaching that speaking in tongues was the Bible evidence of Spirit baptism. The three-year-long [Azusa Street Revival](#), founded and led by William J. Seymour in Los Angeles, California, resulted in the spread of Pentecostalism throughout the United States and the rest of the world as visitors carried the Pentecostal experience back to their home churches or felt called to the [mission field](#). While

virtually all Pentecostal denominations trace their origins to Azusa Street, the movement has experienced a variety of divisions and controversies. An early dispute centered on challenges to the doctrine of the [Trinity](#). As a result, the Pentecostal Movement is divided between trinitarian and [non-trinitarian](#) branches (resulting in the emerging of [Jesus' Name Pentecostals](#)). Most Pentecostals adhere to the “full gospel” or “four square gospel”.

Nazarene - The **Church of the Nazarene** is an [evangelical Christian denomination](#) that emerged from the 19th-century [Holiness movement](#) in North America. With its members commonly referred to as **Nazarenes**, it is the largest [Wesleyan-holiness denomination](#) in the world. The global mission of the Church of the Nazarene since its beginnings has been "to respond to the [Great Commission](#) of Christ to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’ (Matthew 28:19)". The church of the Nazarene adhere to seven characteristics: Meaningful Worship, Theological Coherence, Passionate Evangelism, Intentional Discipleship, Church Development, Transformational Leadership, and Purposeful Compassion. The **Church of the Nazarene** is the product of a series of mergers that occurred between various holiness churches, associations and denominations throughout the 20th century. The most prominent of these mergers took place at the First and Second General Assemblies, held at [Chicago, Illinois](#), and [Pilot Point, Texas](#) in 1907 and 1908, respectively. The primary architect of these early mergers was [C. W. Ruth](#). The church of the Nazarene adheres to the Manual: Church of the Nazarene. Nazarenes have established 16 "Articles of Faith" as a guiding principle for living Christianity.

Catholic - **Catholicism** (from [Greek](#) καθολικισμός, *katholikismos*, "universal doctrine") is a term which in its broadest sense refers to the beliefs and practices of [Christian churches](#) that understand and describe themselves as being [Catholic](#) within the universal and apostolic church. The most frequent uses refer to the faith and practices of the [Catholic Church](#), consisting of the [Latin Church](#) and 23 [Eastern Catholic Churches](#) in [full communion](#) with the [Holy See](#) of [Rome](#), as understood by the [Four Marks of the Church](#). Churches in the Catholic tradition administer seven [sacraments](#) or "sacred mysteries": [Baptism](#), [Confirmation](#) or [Chrismation](#), [Eucharist](#), [Penance](#), also known as Reconciliation, [Anointing of the Sick](#), [Holy Orders](#), and [Matrimony](#). In some Catholic churches this number is regarded as a convention only. In Catholicism, a sacrament is considered to be an efficacious visible sign of God's invisible [grace](#). While the word *mystery* is used not only of these [rites](#), but also with other meanings with reference to revelations of and about God and to God's mystical interaction with creation, the word [sacrament](#) (Latin: *a solemn pledge*), the usual term in the West, refers specifically to these rites.

Church of Christ - **Churches of Christ** are [autonomous Christian congregations](#) associated with one another through common beliefs and practices. They seek to base doctrine and practice on the [Bible](#) alone in order to be the church described in the [New Testament](#). Churches of Christ teach that God saves and adds to the church those who hear the gospel, believe in Christ, repent of sin, confess [Jesus Christ](#) as the [Son of God](#), are [baptized](#) for the remission of sins ([Acts 2:36-38, 47; Rom. 10:9-10](#)) and live according to God's will (James 2:14-17). Modern churches of Christ have their historical roots in the [Restoration Movement](#), which was a converging of Christians across [denominational](#) lines in search of a return to an original, "pre-denominational" Christianity. Participants in this movement sought to base their doctrine and practice on the [Bible](#)

alone, rather than recognizing the traditional [councils](#) and denominational hierarchies that had come to define Christianity since the first century A.D. Members of the churches of Christ believe that Jesus founded only one church, that the current divisions among Christians do not express God's will, and that the only basis for restoring Christian unity is the Bible. They simply identify themselves as "Christians", without using any other forms of religious or denominational identification. They believe that they are recreating the New Testament church as established by Christ.

Seventh Day Adventists - The **Seventh-day Adventist Church** is a [Protestant Christian denomination](#) distinguished by its observance of [Saturday](#), the seventh [day of the week](#) in [Christian](#) and [Jewish calendars](#), as [Sabbath](#), and by its emphasis on the imminent [Second Coming](#) (advent) of Jesus Christ. The denomination grew out of the [Millerite movement](#) in the United States during the mid-19th century and was formally established in 1863. Among its founders was [Ellen G. White](#), whose extensive writings are still held in high regard by the church. The official teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination are expressed in its [28 Fundamental Beliefs](#). This statement of beliefs was originally adopted by the [General Conference](#) in 1980, with an additional belief (number 11) being added in 2005. Acceptance of either of the church's two [baptismal vows](#) is a prerequisite for membership. The following statement of beliefs is not meant to be read or received as a "creed" that is set in theological concrete. [Adventists](#) claim but one creed: "The Bible, and the Bible alone."

Jehovah's Witness - **Jehovah's Witnesses** is a [millenarian restorationist Christian denomination](#) with [nontrinitarian](#) beliefs distinct from mainstream [Christianity](#). The group reports a worldwide membership of more than 8.3 million adherents involved in [evangelism](#), convention attendance figures of more than 17 million, and an annual [Memorial](#) attendance of more than 20 million. Jehovah's Witnesses are directed by the [Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses](#), a group of [elders](#) in [Warwick](#), New York, which establishes all doctrines^[4] based on its interpretations of the [Bible](#). They prefer to use their own translation, the [New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures](#), although their literature occasionally quotes and cites other Bible translations. They believe that the destruction of the present world system at [Armageddon](#) is imminent, and that the establishment of [God's kingdom](#) over the earth is the only solution for all problems faced by humanity. The group emerged from the [Bible Student movement](#), founded in the late 1870s by [Charles Taze Russell](#) with the formation of [Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society](#), with significant organizational and doctrinal changes under the leadership of [Joseph Franklin Rutherford](#). The name *Jehovah's witnesses* was adopted in 1931 to distinguish themselves from other Bible Student groups and symbolize a break with the legacy of [Russell's traditions](#).

Mormon - **Mormons** ([/ˈmɔːrmənz/](#)) are a religious and cultural group related to [Mormonism](#), the principal branch of the [Latter Day Saint movement](#) of [Restorationist Christianity](#), which began with [Joseph Smith](#) in [upstate New York](#) during the 1820s. After Smith's death in 1844, the Mormons followed [Brigham Young](#) to what would become the [Utah Territory](#). Mormons self-identify as [Christian](#), although some non-Mormons consider Mormons non-Christian and some

of their [beliefs differ from mainstream Christianity](#). Mormons have [a scriptural canon](#) consisting of the [Bible](#) (both Old and New Testaments), the [Book of Mormon](#), and a collection of revelations and writings by Joseph Smith known as the [Doctrine and Covenants](#) and [Pearl of Great Price](#).

These groups are listed under our denominations as Christian because of their belief that they are Christian. We will see that some of these groups are not Christian because of what they believe and teach. As we look over the doctrines we will define what makes these organizations non-Christian so that we might have a better way of talking with them about true Christianity.

Doctrines that we will be looking at over the next several weeks:

Trinity

Scripture

Salvation

Security of the Believer

Church

Church Government

Sacraments (Baptism, & Lord's Supper)

The Lord's Day

Last Things

Evangelism and Missions

Stewardship

Spiritual Gifts

Worship

Social Issues Today