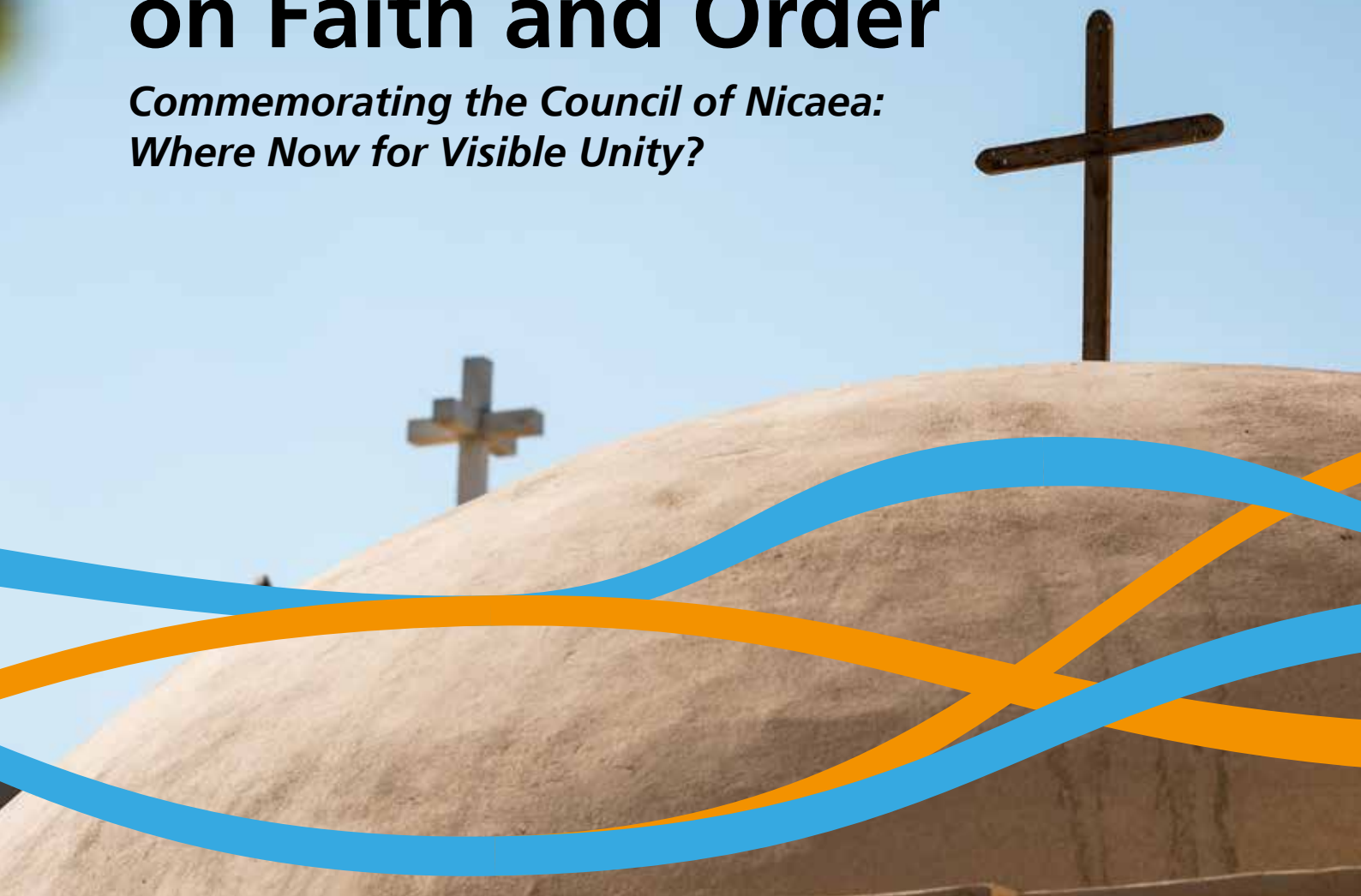


# Toward the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order

*Commemorating the Council of Nicaea:  
Where Now for Visible Unity?*







## Toward the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order

The Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches (WCC) will take place from 24 to 28 October 2025 near Alexandria, Egypt, around the theme “Where now for visible unity?”

The conference will be the centrepiece of the WCC’s activities to mark the 1700th anniversary of the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, a key moment in the history of Christian faith and for the ecumenical journey today.

The first World Conference on Faith and Order was held in 1927 in Lausanne, Switzerland, and led to the creation of the Faith and Order movement, one of the movements for Christian unity that led to the creation of the WCC in 1948.

World Conferences on Faith and Order have been held at key moments in the history of the ecumenical movement, the last gathering being in Santiago de Compostela in 1993.

Three decades after the conference at Santiago de Compostela in 1993, we are now experiencing a significant moment in the life of the world and of the ecumenical movement. There are compelling reasons to bring the churches together for a world conference in our times.

A world of climate catastrophe, pandemic, war, and economic concern requires a fresh engagement of the churches with one another on the core issues of faith, unity, and mission that both unite and continue to divide them.

Bringing together church leaders and theologians of different traditions as well as involving a new generation of ecumenists, the Sixth World Conference will approach the theme “Where now for visible unity?” from the interconnected vantage points of faith, mission, and unity.

It will reaffirm the WCC’s commitment to assist the churches as they call one another to visible unity to advance the unity of humanity and of all creation.



## Commemorating the Council of Nicaea

The convening of the Council of Nicaea in 325 was a defining moment for the Christian church. It was the first attempt to reach consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom. It affirmed the Christian faith in the triune God, and marked the transition from Christians being a persecuted minority to becoming a church recognized by the Roman State.

In Nicaea, now İznik in present-day Türkiye, Christians who only recently had been persecuted in the Roman Empire were able to gather under the patronage of the emperor to affirm their faith and witness to the society around them. Then, as now, the call to unity was heard within the context of a troubled, unequal, and divided world.

The anniversary offers an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the affirmation of faith in the Nicene Creed, the mission of God's triune love, and the implications this has for the common witness and service of the churches.

The distinctive task of Faith and Order is to invite the churches to speak and listen to one another and to speak together.

Inspired by the anniversary of Nicaea, the Sixth World Conference will explore what it means to live the apostolic faith together today and how the churches can summon one another to visible unity in Christ.

Like Nicaea, the conference will seek to draw together faith and contemporary thought. It will not avoid questions about practices of discipleship resulting from the church's association with imperial powers that require intense self-reflection by churches today.

Alongside the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order, the World Council of Churches is planning activities to mark the anniversary of Nicaea with member and other churches, Christian World Communions, national and regional organizations, and theological and ecumenical institutions.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2025 will focus on Nicaea, with prayers, resources, and activities for Christians everywhere.

In 2025, the Easter calendars of Eastern and Western Christianity coincide, meaning that the whole of Christendom will celebrate Easter and Pentecost on the same days.



## Where Now for Visible Unity?

The theme of the World Conference, “Where now for visible unity?” will be addressed from the interrelated perspectives of faith, mission, and unity, reaffirming the WCC’s vision of churches calling one another to visible unity and advancing the unity of humanity and of all creation.

**Faith:** The conference will be guided by Faith and Order studies on “confessing the one faith,” as well as emerging faith issues, such as engaging with world Christianity – including Christians who do not use the historic creeds – in exploring the catholic and apostolic faith and finding ways to illuminate the Nicene Creed to allow for clarity and understanding across cultures and traditions.

**Mission:** The conference offers an opportunity to reflect on the outpouring of God’s triune love as a missiological model. This model urges churches to reconsider their historical relationships with colonial and imperial powers, exploring the decolonizing perspective provided by the Nicene Creed. It also invites considerations on how Christians can confess their faith in a pluralistic society in ways that promote peace and do not condemn the religious “other.” Partnerships with other WCC programmes, especially the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, will help these explorations.

**Unity:** An increasingly divided and polarized world needs the search for unity of Christians and churches. This unity is not uniformity. It implies the fundamental and profound conviction that humankind must stand together to seek each other’s best interests and to uphold the dignity of each human being and the whole creation. Has the fellowship of churches in the WCC faithfully exercised its commitment to call each other to visible unity? How can this unity embrace diversity? The anniversary of the Council of Nicaea is an encouragement to consider the significance of ecumenical councils as places where Christians can face together the issues on which they are separated.



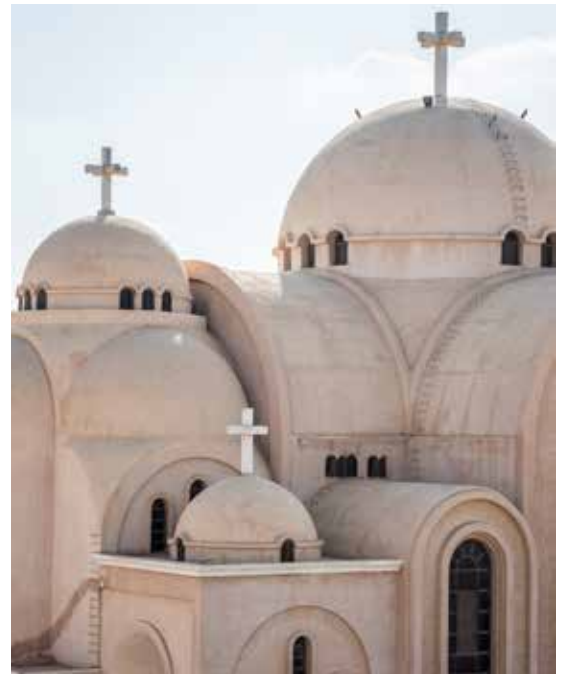
## Meeting in Egypt

At the invitation of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order will take place at Wadi El Natrun, near Alexandria, Egypt. It will meet at the Logos Papal Center of the Coptic Orthodox Church, close to the ancient and highly significant St Bishoy Monastery, one of the most important monastic centres in Egypt.

The See of Alexandria is historically significant for early Christianity, with an important role in the debates that led to the Council of Nicaea. St Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, sought to resolve the Arian controversy and facilitated the reception of the Nicene faith.

Established by the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Logos Papal Center embodies Alexandria's legacy of cultural diversity and scholarly and theological exchange and is a living testament to the enduring influence of Alexandrian theology. It is an important venue for theological studies, religious education, and cultural activities.

The architecture of the centre, blending modern and formal elements, mirrors the historical role of Alexandria as a confluence of cultures and faiths. Like Alexandria



in ancient times, the centre fosters unity, peace, and understanding in the region.

The spiritual role of the centre is further enriched by being close to the St Bishoy Monastery. Founded in the fourth century, the monastery is a vibrant spiritual community. It has a rich library of ancient manuscripts and artefacts, upholding a monastic tradition that emphasizes asceticism, prayer, and Christian love. This tradition has deeply influenced Coptic spirituality, as well as religious practices and cultural norms in Egypt.

As a bridge between ancient monastic traditions and the contemporary needs of a diverse society, the Logos Papal Center stands as a place of dialogue and intellectual and spiritual inquiry. Deeply rooted in the rich history of Alexandrian theology, the venue of the Sixth World Conference symbolizes the yearning for deep theological reflection in service to the unity of the churches and all humanity.

*The Logos Papal Center in Wadi El Natrun, Egypt. Photo: Bishop Anba Suriel.*



## World Conferences on Faith and Order

The World Conference on Faith and Order in 2025 will be the sixth such gathering since the first was held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1927. This gave birth to the Faith and Order movement, and since then, World Conferences on Faith and Order have been held at key moments in the history of the ecumenical movement.

The Second World Conference was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1937, after which the Faith and Order movement joined with another ecumenical initiative, the Life and Work movement, to form the World Council of Churches in 1948.

With the founding of the WCC, a Commission on Faith and Order was created to take forward the movement's work. Further conferences were held in Lund, Sweden, in 1952; Montreal, Canada, in 1963; and Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in 1993.

Each conference gathered church representatives from around the world who wrestled with the issues of faith and church order in the contexts of their day. Together, they searched for the manifestation of the one Church of Christ in eucharistic fellowship through agreement on apostolic faith, sacramental life, and ministry.

The world conferences also have to be seen against the background of the world and global situation when they met – from the growing threats to peace that coincided with Edinburgh 1937 to the onset of a neoliberal global order at the time of the 1993 world conference.

The conferences have been events that have gathered up the work on Faith and Order in the preceding period and set the agenda for the future, not only for the work on Faith and Order but also for the wider ecumenical fellowship and the WCC.

Such agenda-setting work includes the “Lund principle” of 1952, which states that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately; the discussion on “Scripture, Tradition, and tradition” at Montreal (1963), and the emphasis on *koinonia* that resulted from the 1993 conference in Santiago de Compostela.



### World Conferences on Faith and Order

1927: Lausanne, Switzerland

1937: Edinburgh, Scotland

1952: Lund, Sweden

1963: Montreal, Canada

1993: Santiago de Compostela, Spain



## Receiving the Work of Faith and Order



Photo: Valter Muniz/WCC

The Sixth World Conference will be an opportunity to receive the work undertaken by the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order since the last world conference in Santiago de Compostela in 1993, and especially since the publication of the most recent convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* in 2013, the fruit of three decades of international ecumenical conversation.

Published reports include the almost 80 responses to the text on *The Church* and the preparation of papers on 16 key theological themes that emerged from these responses by the Faith and Order Commission.

As part of this process of reception, the commission has produced reports on the results of a wide range of conversations with perspectives from various regions, especially from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, denominational families, and new forms of being church that have not always been clearly or strongly part of the discussions.

As part of its work to consider “moral discernment” in the churches and how and why church traditions differ on ethical and moral issues, the commission has developed a tool, *Churches and Moral Discernment. Facilitating Dialogue to Build Koinonia*, which churches can use to analyse disagreement and work constructively toward understanding.

Further, the commission has produced short texts to provide rich theological foundations for the WCC's Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and the call to unity that it contains.

The conference will provide an opportunity for the reception and enhancement of these explorations and texts, and it will also explore new avenues for dialogue and collaboration on faith and witness.

## Broadening the Table

Meeting in Egypt, on the continent of Africa, this will be the first world conference to take place in the global South, at a time when the “centre of gravity” in the Christian world has shifted to the southern hemisphere, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The fellowship of churches within the WCC represents only a section of World Christianity. Thousands of newer churches – Evangelical, Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal, Charismatic, and African Instituted/Independent Churches – have sprung up, especially since the mid-20th century and in the global South.

The Sixth World Conference will seek to broaden the “table of conversation” to include perspectives from as

broad a spectrum as possible of regions, church traditions, and forms of being church. This broadening of the table continues the spirit of the ecumenical movement since its very beginnings, namely, to include the whole of World Christianity.

The purpose is not that these churches will become members of the WCC or of Faith and Order; it means creating opportunities and spaces for all to interact and listen to each other. The spirit that gave birth to the ecumenical movement was a spirit of engagement with the whole of World Christianity; thus, engaging with the whole of World Christianity today is a matter of faithfulness to the ecumenical tradition.



## A Spiritual Gathering

Prayer is at the heart of our pilgrimage toward Christian unity. As with other global gatherings hosted by the World Council of Churches, the spiritual life of the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order will aim to be the heartbeat of the meeting, shaping the daily rhythm of the gathering.

Meeting in Egypt at the invitation of the Coptic Orthodox Church, participants at the Sixth World Conference will be spiritually nourished by the mysticism of the desert of the host church while inhabiting the spirituality of global Christianity.

Three pillars will anchor the daily spiritual moments: scripture reading, singing, and praying. These will be intertwined with confessional and interconfessional liturgical and cultural expressions reflecting the universal Christian church's rich diversity and tapestry.

Spiritual and biblical reflections being prepared on the journey to the World Conference will encourage churches, congregations, and parishes to explore the theme of the gathering, relating it to their own life and experience. These will include reflections on biblical texts, with suggestions for prayer and song, as well as questions for study.

The thematic focus for the 2025 annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has also been inspired by the text of the Nicene-Constantinople Creed. This spiritual resource will serve as the foundation for the spiritual life of the Sixth World Conference.

It is hoped this will accomplish the long-held desire for the material for the Week of Prayer to be used “throughout the whole year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already reached, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ’s will.”





## Encouraging a New Generation of Theologians and Ecumenists

A Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) being held in conjunction with the Sixth World Conference will offer space for a new generation of younger and emerging ecumenical theologians and educators from a broad spectrum of Christian traditions and all eight regions of the WCC to engage with the work of Faith and Order.

After an initial four-week online phase, the residential phase of GETI will take place at the conference location from 13 to 28 October 2025. It will bring together up to 130 participants to engage with the conference theme and one another, as well as the critical theological themes of our time.

This will be the fourth GETI organized by the WCC following the first such event at the WCC's 10th Assembly in 2013 in Busan, South Korea. GETIs took place in 2018, organized around the Conference for World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha, Tanzania, and in 2022, in conjunction with the WCC's 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany.

GETI will be a place for ecumenical leadership formation, theological learning, mutual dialogue, and intergenerational dialogue with leaders of the ecumenical movement. It aims to enable participants to:

- Strengthen knowledge of current local and global ecumenical themes
- Engage with past, present, and future issues in ecumenical discourse
- Utilize interdisciplinary approaches for ecumenical studies
- Express a theologically informed and contextually grounded ecumenical theology
- Seek constructive responses to challenges in changing religious and societal landscapes

GETI is being prepared and is supported by the Ecumenical Theological Education programme of the WCC in cooperation with the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey and a network of partnering theological colleges and associations of theological schools.



# Resources

## Nicaea 2025

Leading up to the Nicaea commemoration in 2025, the World Council of Churches will be producing spiritual life resources, Bible studies related to the Sixth World Conference, webinars on key aspects of the work of Faith and Order, and publications and articles on relevant topics.

For further details and information about how you can support the conference, please contact:

**[Nicaea2025@wcc-coe.org](mailto:Nicaea2025@wcc-coe.org)**

**[www.oikoumene.org/Nicaea2025](http://www.oikoumene.org/Nicaea2025)**

## Commission on Faith and Order

The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches undertakes theological studies so that the churches may reach agreement across their diversity and grow in mutual care and accountability. The name “Faith and Order” refers to two areas in which remaining disagreements hamper communion or unity among Christian churches. The first is “faith” in the sense of what churches believe. Significant disagreements on what churches believe prevent common life among them. The second area is “order” in the sense of how church ministry is organized as it serves and communicates God’s salvation in Christ. Significant disagreements in this area also prevent communion among churches.

More information

**[www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/faith-and-order-commission](http://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/faith-and-order-commission)**

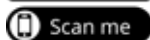


Photo: Marcelo Schneider/WCC

## Faith and Order Papers

The results of the work of the Commission on Faith and Order are published in a series of Faith and Order Papers. These papers offer access to Faith and Order studies and the results of conferences and consultations, and document progress in modern ecumenical theology as well as the circumstances in which this progress has taken place.

Recently published Faith and Order Papers can be found at <https://bit.ly/faithandorderpapers>



In addition, the Faith and Order Papers Digital Edition hosted by the Internet Archive includes digitized versions of all Faith and Order Papers published since 1913, allowing full-text searches across all these texts.

The Faith and Order Papers Digital Edition is available at <https://bit.ly/faithandorderpapersdigitaledition>







## An Invitation

The Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order will be a major milestone in the history of the ecumenical movement, allowing us to reflect on the legacy and current relevance of the Council of Nicaea, and to embrace our identity as people of faith, proclaiming Christ's Good News in today's world.

Recalling the significance of the Council of Nicaea renews our call for full visible unity, the foundation of the ecumenical movement. It reminds us that our goal is not just increasing theological agreement but a unity that is visible and tangible, reflecting the oneness of the body of Christ.

In the midst of divisions, injustice, and hopelessness, let us commit to proclaiming the hope for a better world, transformed by divine mercy. Let us commit to working towards the visible unity of the Church, journeying together on the Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity.

We invite you to join us on this journey.

*Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay  
General Secretary  
World Council of Churches*






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