



World Council
of Churches

2025 –
An Ecumenical Year on
the Pilgrimage of Justice,
Reconciliation, and Unity



A world of climate catastrophe, pandemic, war, and economic and social injustice requires a fresh commitment to seek the unity of the church and of all humanity, indeed of all creation.

Confessing our shared faith in the triune God as transforming disciples of Jesus Christ, moved by the Spirit, we journey together on the Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity to which we were called by the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

In seeking to renew the quest for unity of the churches and of all humanity, the WCC and the wider ecumenical fellowship find inspiration in two significant anniversaries that fall in 2025:

- **The 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325**, the first attempt to reach consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom. This gathering inspired the modern ecumenical movement to work on issues of Faith and Order for the unity of the church and humankind.
- **The 100th anniversary of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm in 1925**, bringing together Christian leaders from Anglican, Protestant, and Orthodox traditions and sometimes described as the “Nicaea of ethics” in reference to the breadth of its representation. The conference spoke out for justice, peace, and reconciliation after the carnage of the First World War and gave birth to the Life and Work movement, which united with Faith and Order to form the WCC in 1948.



The World Council of Churches and 2025

Inspired by Nicaea and Stockholm, in 2025 the WCC will explore what it means to be “Living the Apostolic Faith Together Today.” In its work for unity and witness in society, the WCC’s vocation is realized in a creative tension as churches call one another to visible unity and as they work for the unity of all humanity.

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2025, the WCC will recall with the wider Christian fellowship the common faith of the church in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

The WCC will look to the common celebration of Easter and Pentecost by Eastern and Western Christianity in 2025 as a foretaste of the time when

all Christians will celebrate the Risen Lord on the same date.

The WCC central committee will meet in Johannesburg in June 2025, a year that marks the 40th anniversary of the South African Kairos Document, which denounced apartheid from the standpoint of faith and biblical theology.

The WCC will also recall the first meeting in 1965 of the Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church as a milestone on the path of the one ecumenical movement.



Witnessing together for a more just world

In August 2025, the WCC will gather with partners in Sweden and representatives of churches worldwide to commemorate the Stockholm conference of 1925 as a “Time for God’s Peace” in a world disfigured by war and injustice. This commemoration will also bring together younger theologians to reflect on the inspiration of Stockholm 1925 and the meaning of ecumenical peacebuilding today.

The Stockholm conference of 1925 offered a decisive impetus for the churches of the world to witness in society and work together for a more just and peaceful world. This has been expressed in support for refugees, displaced, and uprooted peoples; working to create a global human rights order; the struggle against racism and apartheid; bridging the divisions between East and West at the time of

the Cold War; underlining the need to banish nuclear weapons and to work for a just peace; intergenerational justice between younger and older people; the struggle for gender justice in church and society; promoting climate justice and a just, participatory, and sustainable society.

This vision inspires us today to work for a world that faithfully reflects God’s desire for a humanity that overcomes racial, gender, and intergenerational injustice.

In Berlin in May 2025, the WCC and partners in Germany will mark the 140th anniversary of the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, where European imperial powers, often supported by missionary endeavour, partitioned the continent of Africa. It will reflect how churches contribute



to affirming the humanity, dignity, and hopes of Africans and People of African Descent.

The conference will explore possible intersections with the Council of Nicaea, especially around relations between Church and Empire, and the 1925 Life and Work conference in Stockholm, which remains one of the defining features of modern ecumenism and which was convened 40 years after Berlin had partitioned Africa.

The WCC will commit itself to working for a just community of women and men, recalling the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, in 1995, which marked a turning point in the global agenda for gender equality.



Witnessing to unity in a divided and polarized world

The centrepiece of the 2025 commemorations will be the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order, to be held near Alexandria in Egypt in October 2025.

World Conferences on Faith and Order have been held at key moments in the history of the ecumenical movement, and this will be the first such conference to meet in the 21st century.

Drawing inspiration from the Council of Nicaea, which gathered the whole of Christendom, the conference will bring together the ecumenical fellowship around the theme “Where Now for Visible Unity?”

It will focus on “being church toward visible unity” from the interrelated

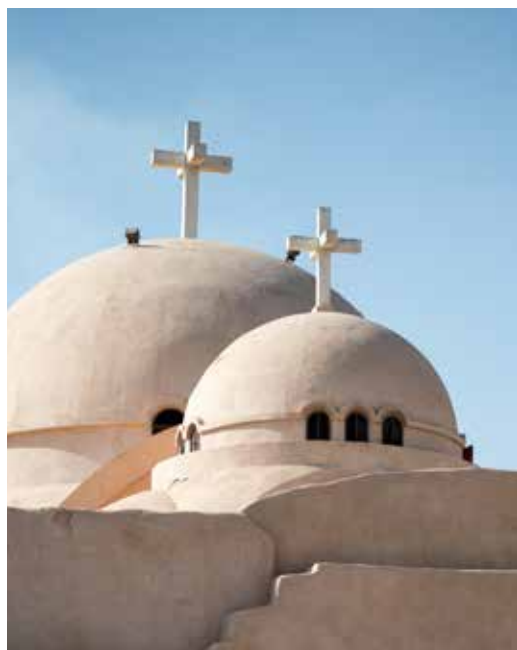
perspectives of faith, mission, and unity; engage with world Christianity; examine the significance of Nicaea for relationships with imperial and colonial powers; witness to faith in a religiously plural society; and explore how the call to unity can support diversity.

The conference will discuss what it means to be “the church in and for the world,” facing questions of peace, violence, and reconciliation, and what “being human” and made in the image of God means at a time of artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and other challenges.

It will be the first World Conference on Faith and Order in the global South, meeting in Egypt, on the African continent, as the “centre of gravity” of the Christian world has shifted to the southern hemisphere, namely, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

It will broaden the “table of conversation” to include perspectives from as broad a spectrum as possible of church traditions and forms of being church, including Evangelical, Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal, Charismatic, and African Instituted or Independent churches.

It will reflect on the implications of decolonial thought, the digital revolution, global migration, and other large-scale changes in the quest for the





unity of Christian churches, as well as of humanity in an increasingly divided and polarized world.

Its setting in the Middle East will serve as a reminder that as Christians and churches seek unity, we do so in dialogue with people of other religions and beliefs.

A Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI), with up to 150 participants, will be held in conjunction with the World Conference. This will be another opportunity to nurture a new generation of younger and emerging ecumenical theologians.

The heartbeat of the conference will be its spiritual life, shaping the daily rhythm of the gathering. The spiritual impulses will draw on the spiritual resources and the desert mysticism of its host, the Coptic Orthodox Church, while inhabiting the spirituality of global Christianity.

A word of hope

In 1993, the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order was held in Santiago de Compostela, a place of pilgrims that profoundly shaped the pilgrimage of the ecumenical movement into the 21st century. Three decades later, recalling the anniversaries of Nicaea and Stockholm will shape the ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity as the WCC moves toward its 12th Assembly in 2030.

Our response in this critical time

In a time of climate catastrophe, pandemic, war, economic concern, and social injustice, there is a temptation to withdraw and withhold. The fear of the future can transfix us.

However, as people of faith and good will, we know that is not the response to take. Rather, we take positive action in response to the fear around us. We invite you to identify with the World Conference, pray for the gathering, and invite others to do the same. You are also invited to support the World Conference financially as you are able – and thereby to stand in solidarity with others around the world!

The costs will be substantial. The opportunity is considerable.

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

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