Universität Zürich[UZH]
Faculty of Theology and the Study of Religion

UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE
Faculty of Theology

The Future of the Reformed Church in Switzerland

A multilingual theological conference

Sunday, October 19 – Tuesday, October 21, 2025 in Zurich

organized by
the Faculty of Theology and the Study of Religion of the University of Zurich: the Institute of Hermeneutics and Philosophy of Religion (IHR), the Centre for Church Development (ZKE) and the Faculty of Theology of the University of Geneva: Institute for Systematic and Ethics (IRSE) and the Lemanic Institute of Practical Theology (ILTP)

Organizing committee
Christophe Chalamet, Ralph Kunz, Élisabeth Parmentier, Thomas Schlag and Matthias Wüthrich

In cooperation with
Swiss Theological Society (SThG)

Conference topic

Five hundred years after the beginning of the Reformation, the Reformed Church in Switzerland is still a venerable and life-relevant institution that offers many people a spiritual and intellectual home. It is still standing, but is it also moving? Its existence and continued presence are not a matter of course. Its reputation has suffered and the outlook for the coming years is challenging. It is not only the loss of members that is forcing it and those in positions of responsibility within it to rethink their place and their public responsibility. What might the future of the Reformed Church in Switzerland look like?
This conference does not want to and cannot predict it. But all the more possible ways for the Reformed Church are to be explored on a sound theological basis – so that it can make recognisable contributions to making the gospel shine again and be convincingly lived in a torn world.

Conference program

Sunday, October 19, 2025

16h15	Opening of the conference: Greetings by Matthias Wüthrich and Christophe Chalamet on behalf of the organizing committee, and by Michael Coors Rita Famos: *Gemeinsam Kirche sein – Hoffnung und Perspektiven für die Zukunft*
17h00-19h00	*Rethinking (Reformed) Church amidst the Ruins of Christendom* Inaugural lecture by Edwin Chr. van Driel (40 min.), responses by Emma van Dorp and Sabrina Müller (15 min. each), plenary discussion

Monday, October 20, 2025

8h00	Morning prayer (Grossmünster; 20 min.) Christian Walti
9h00-10h30	*Relevant um jeden Preis?* with Ralph Kunz (30 min.), responses by Matthias Zeindler and Elio Jaillet (15 min. each) and discussion (30 min.)
10h30-11h00	break
11h00-12h30	*(Seulement) la parole et le langage verbal dans une culture qui a soif d'expérience et d'émotion?* with Elisabeth Parmentier (30 min.), response by Miriam Rose (20 min.) and discussion (40 min.)
12h30	lunch
14h30-16h00	workshops (multilingual) *Workshop 1 (aki): Transformations in the Practices of Sacraments – Changes and Criteria* with David Plüss, Ursula Schumacher and Luca Baschera, moderated by Elisabeth Parmentier *Workshop 2 (aki): Transformations in Church Ministry – Changes and Criteria* with Angela Berlis, Martin Schmidt and Thomas Schaufelberger, moderated by Matthias Wüthrich *Workshop 3 (aki): Transformations in Church Music – Changes and Criteria* with Andreas Marti, Katrin Kusmierz, Andreas Hausammann, moderated by Ralph Kunz

	Workshop 4 (Helferei): Transformations in Church Membership – Changes and Criteria with René Pahud de Mortanges, Georg Lämmlin and Arnd Bünker, moderated by Thomas Schlag
	Workshop 5 (Grossmünster): Ritual and Liturgy – Changes and Criteria with Christian Walti, Christine Oefele, moderated by Christophe Chalamet
16h00	break
16h30-18h15	*Is Transformation Really Possible? – panel discussion* with Anne Abruzzi, Christina aus der Au, Iwan Schulthess, Christoph Weber-Berg and Yves Bourquin; moderation: David Plüss and Angela Berlis

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

8h00	Morning prayer (Predigerkirche; 20 min.) Kathrin Rehmat
9h00-10h30	*Die Zukunft der Ortsgemeinde. Eine theologische Reflexion am Beispiel der kirchlichen Entwicklung in der Evangelischen Kirche in Hessen und Nassau* with Juliane Schüz (30 min.), response by Andrea Bieler (20 min.); general discussion
10h30	break
11h00-12h45	'*Prophezei' Old and New. On the Communal Witness to the Gospel in a Pluralistic and Secularizing Society* with Bruce Gordon (30 min.), response by Stephan Jütte (20 min.); general discussion
12h45	Concluding remarks by Thomas Schlag on behalf of the organizing committee
13h00	End of the conference and concluding meal

Speakers

Abruzzi, Anne, Vice-President of the Synodal Council of the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Vaud (EERV)
Aus der Au, Christina, Prof. Dr., President of the Church Council of the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Thurgau
Baschera, Luca, PD Dr., Lecturer in Practical Theology, University of Zurich
Berlis, Angela, Prof. Dr., Professor of the History of Old Catholicism and Church History in General, University of Bern
Bieler, Andrea, Prof. Dr., Professor of Practical Theology, University of Basel
Bourquin, Yves, Pastor, President of the Synod Council of the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Neuchâtel (EREN)
Bünker, Arnd, Tit.Prof. Dr., Head of the Swiss Pastoral Sociological Institute, St. Gallen
Coors, Michael, Prof. Dr., Professor for theological ethics and dean of the Faculty of Theology and the Study of Religion, University of Zurich
Famos, Rita, President of the Protestant Church in Switzerland (PCS) and President of the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)
Gordon, Bruce, Prof. Dr., Titus Street Professor of Reformation History, Yale Divinity School
Hausammann, Andreas, Director of the Protestant Church Music School of St. Gallen (ekms)
Jaillet, Elio, Dr., Responsible for theological and ethical issues, Protestant Church in Switzerland (PCS)
Jütte, Stephan, Dr., Head of the Departement of Theology and Ethics of the Protestant Church in Switzerland (PCS)
Kusmierz, Katrin, Dr., Scientific director of the Competence Center for Liturgy, University of Bern
Lämmlin, Georg, Prof. Dr., Director of the Social Science Institute of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD)
Marti, Andreas, Prof. em. Dr., theologian, organist, harpsichordist, choirmaster, hymnologist

Müller, Sabrina, Prof. Dr., Professor of Practical Theology, University of Bonn
Oefele, Christine, Dr., Liturgy and Music Officer at the Liturgy and Hymnal Conference of the Reformed Churches of German-speaking Switzerland (LGBK)
Pahud de Mortanges, René, Prof. Dr., Professor of Legal History and Canon Law, University of Fribourg
Plüss, David, Prof. Dr., Professor of Homiletics, Liturgics and Church Theory, University of Bern
Rehmat, Kathrin, Pastor, member of the advisory board of the Association of Orthodox Churches in the Canton of Zurich
Rose, Miriam, Prof. Dr., Professor of Systematic Theology / Dogmatics, University of Basel
Schmidt, Martin, President of the Church Council, Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of St. Gallen
Schulthess, Iwan, Pastor, member of the Synodal Council of the Reformed Churches of Bern-Jura-Solothurn
Schumacher, Ursula, Prof. Dr., Professor of Dogmatics, University of Lucerne
Schaufelberger, Thomas, Pastor, Head of Church Development, Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich
Schüz, Juliane, Dr., Pastor, Dean of the Protestant Deanery Hochtaunus, Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau
van Dorp, Emma, Assistant in Systematic Theology, University of Geneva
van Driel, Edwin Chr., Prof. Dr., Rev., Directors' Bicentennial Professor of Theology, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (PA/USA)
Walti, Christian, Dr., Pastor at Grossmünster Zurich
Weber-Berg, Christoph, Dr., President of the Church Council of the Reformed Church of Aargau
Zeindler, Matthias, Prof. em. Dr., Emeritus Tit.Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Bern and former Head of Theology at the Reformed Churches of Bern-Jura-Solothurn

Organizing committee
Chalamet, Christophe, Prof. Dr., Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Geneva
Kunz, Ralph, Prof. Dr., Professor of Practical Theology, University of Zurich
Parmentier, Élisabeth, Professor of Practical Theology, University of Geneva
Schlag, Thomas, Prof. Dr., Professor of Practical Theology, University of Zurich
Wüthrich, Matthias, Prof. Dr., Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Zurich

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Faculty of Theology, University of Geneva
Institute for Systematic and Ethics (IRSE), University of Geneva
Lemanic Institute of Practical Theology (ILTP), University of Genva and Lausanne
Réforme progressive, Geneva
Reformed Church of Geneva (EPG)
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Vaud (EERV)
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Neuchâtel (EREN)
Foundation of the Evangelical Reformed Parish of Zurich
Swiss Reformation Foundation
Academic Society of the University of Geneva (SACAD)
Fonds général of the University of Geneva
Commission administrative of the University of Geneva (COMAD)
Faculty of Theology and the Study of Religion (TRF), University of Zurich
European Academy on Religion and Society (EARS)

Event location
University of Zurich
Conference Room: RAA-G-01 Aula klein
Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zürich

Registration

The conference is open to all interested parties free of charge.
We kindly ask you to register via the QR code or link ema.uzh.ch/RFJAU