

**Wisconsin Council of Churches Annual Report**  
**By Rev. Scott D. Anderson, Executive Director**  
[www.wichurches.org](http://www.wichurches.org)

*We pray and work for the unity and renewal of the church  
and the healing and reconciliation of the world.*

Tracing its roots back to the early 1940's with an inter-denominational recreation ministry for young people, the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) now encompasses 14 denominations with approximately 2,200 congregations and over one million church members statewide. The Council welcomed the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) into membership this past year.

**2011 Accomplishments**

**Equipping Leaders** - The Council's signature educational event for clergy each summer is the Washington Island Forum, which in 2011 drew 255 pastors and lay leaders from 21 states representing 14 faith traditions to hear Forum Presenter Dr. Marcus Borg. His theme, *Speaking Christian*, focused on understanding traditional Christian terminology in our contemporary context. The Council also hosts regional events throughout the year on a variety of timely topics to equip clergy and lay leaders for effective ministry.

**Greening our Faith and our Communities** - The Council continues to focus its advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The WCC has also been a partner in the creation of *Wisconsin Interfaith Power and Light*, which is affiliated with a national effort to educate congregations on how to be good stewards of the environment.

**Beyond Survival: What is God's Future for the Small Church?** - The Council sponsored workshops in Barneveld and Franklin to equip rural congregations for effective ministry in their local communities.

**From Tolerance to Empathy** - was the theme of a unique event co-sponsored with the Islamic Society of Milwaukee bringing 240 Christians and Muslims together for interfaith dialogue on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11.

**Looking Ahead to 2012**

**Washington Island Forum** - Sara Miles, founder and director of The Food Pantry and Director of Ministry at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco, will be addressing the theme "Being Jesus." Miles is the author of two award winning books and her writing has appeared in the New York Times Magazine. For more information about the Forum and all WCC educational events, go to [www.wichurches.org/events](http://www.wichurches.org/events).

**Becoming Welcoming Communities** - is a new project in collaboration with *WISDOM*, the church-based community organizing program in Wisconsin, and *Voces de la Frontera*, the largest immigrant rights group in our state. This two-year project has produced a congregational study guide on the history of immigration in Wisconsin and contemporary challenges faced by new immigrants in our state. The study guide is free and available on our website at [www.wichurches.org](http://www.wichurches.org)

**A Season of Civility** - What can the religious community do to help address the polarized political environment in Wisconsin? The Council is producing discussion resources for congregations to help create a Season of Civility during the fall elections in our state.