

Wisconsin Council of Churches Annual Report
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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) began in 1947 and now encompasses 18 denominations with approximately 2,000 congregations and over one million church members statewide.

2015 Accomplishments

Equipping Leaders - The Council's signature educational event each summer is the Washington Island Forum, which in 2015 drew 180 pastors and lay leaders from 18 states representing 15 faith traditions to hear Forum presenter John Bell from the Iona Community in Scotland. The Council also hosts regional events throughout the year on a variety of timely topics to equip clergy and lay leaders for effective ministry, including a three year pilot to provide boundary training for clergy on behalf of several WCC members.

Hunger at our Doorstep - the Council is now promoting its updated study guide *Hunger at Our Doorstep*, which was sent to every congregation in the state in 2014. It is available as a free, downloadable resource from the Council's website at www.wichurches.org. Regional training workshops are scheduled for 2016.

New denominational partners - Over the last several years several new denominational partners have joined our ranks, including the Mennonite Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Armenian Orthodox Church. The Catholic Diocese of Green Bay has joined as our third Observer from the Roman Catholic Church.

Poverty - the Council joined three statewide partners have hosted 18 regional forums over the last two years with over 1,300 local religious leaders to raise the voice of Wisconsin's faith community in addressing poverty. Forums were held in Madison, Milwaukee, Eau Claire, Stevens Point, Green Bay, Wausau and Appleton.

Looking Ahead to 2016

Washington Island Forum - 2016 Forum Presenter Carol Howard Merritt will speak on the topic of "The Church on the Edge," lifting up emerging models of congregational life. For more information about the Forum and all WCC educational events, go to www.wichurches.org/events.

Winter Forum - The Council has launched a two-day winter forum in the Wisconsin Dells to complement the summer Washington Island Forum. The 2016 Forum was Feb. 25-26 was held with Sr. Simone Campbell from "Nuns on the Bus" to speak about social justice advocacy

Poverty - a third round of regional forums is planned for the late spring of 2016 as we develop an anti-poverty agenda and a statewide constituency within Wisconsin's religious community to advocate for it.

New Congregational Study Resources - will be released in 2016. *Loving our Neighbors* is focused on the "why" and "how" of deepening our interfaith relationships. The second study resource will be focused on racial equity issues in Wisconsin. Both will be available to every congregation in the state.