



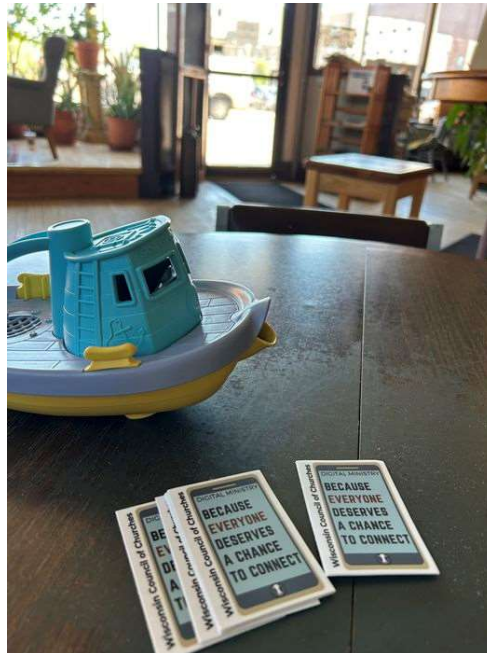
HEADLINES (the short version, as 2023 unfolded)

- COVID wasn't over. But people were done with COVID. Education continued!
- Churches are eager for teaching and resources about indigenous justice
- We are back out in the field! We haven't abandoned webinars, though – just more strategic

The **Ecumenical Boat** (right) accompanied our staff for an epic road trip of **2600 miles**, **15 digital equity conversations** in **14 cities** in **11 WI counties** this summer.

Through a partnership with the United Way thanks to a grant from the Public Service Commission's **Internet for All Project**, we hosted listening sessions about internet affordability, accessibility, adoption and security.

We learned about the **church's potential roles in overcoming digital equity issues**, and the ways churches are living out digital ministry creatively in their own contexts.



"**Awaken Dane** has truly changed my life. It has awakened me to people, experiences, and a whole new way of thinking about being God's hands in the places where I am. I'm keeping my hands in my lap and my ears open so that I will be ready to join in with what is already happening, rather than racing in to "help out." I admit that this is new for me. And that I am energized by it."

**Awaken Dane**, our Lilly Endowment-funded initiative **accepted its third cohort** this summer, and is currently working with 12 churches. Many have begun experiments in their own communities to apply the transformational learning! Our first cohort has graduated, but we hear they're still using what they learned!



The **Community Health Program** finished two research projects with the University of Wisconsin and conducted a survey/visioning process of its own!

**Implemented:** Streamlined governance as passed by last year's annual meeting

**Indigenous Justice** came to the foreground this year with quarterly participation in the WI Intertribal Repatriation Committee, preaching, teaching on land acknowledgments done better. Staff facilitated conversations & provided resources on restorative action to individuals, churches and judicatories.

While the purpose of these efforts is to have predominantly white congregations "do their own work," a list and story bank of actions is now available for churches looking for idea generators.

**Q: What happens when you crowd-source advocacy? A: Advocates show up.**

When we heard (on short notice) that our Wisconsin legislature was taking up some legislation that would harm vulnerable people, instead of sending a mass email inviting people to contact their electeds, we took to social media and text message. We reached out directly to motivated people we knew were passionate about the issue at hand. This was important work, **we know our why, and we didn't want to show up alone.**

On the day of the hearing, **over thirty faith leaders provided testimony.** Clergy showed up in clericals, wearing stoles, speaking with conviction, bearing snacks! Those waiting to testify filled an overflow room from the overflow room. We were told, "**they expected the social workers. They didn't expect the church!**"

In addition to those who were able to come in person, others emailed in testimony, posted recordings of their words to social media, and affirmed to vulnerable youth in our state that they are not alone. **This is the promise. We don't go alone.**