

Green Notes: Weekly tips for reducing your carbon footprint from First United Methodist's Green Team

Solar Pledges Reach \$11,500; Grant-Writing Begins

February may be the shortest month, but it overflowed with energy (solar) and success (pledges) at 300 East Main Street. In a flash, First Church members pledged \$11,500 of the \$20,000 we need to show a commitment to provide our building's electricity with solar power.

Now comes the hard part: securing the final \$8,500 in pledges and writing a successful grant application to NorthWestern Energy for the remaining \$70,000 we'll need to place a solar array atop the Education Annex. Deadline for the application is May 1, so we're already at work on the necessary paperwork.

NorthWestern not only wants a detailed description of our project, but the system's engineering and design documents; detailed cost lists; a look at the solar array's projected yearly output, life expectancy and lifetime output; the plan for system maintenance; a list of any needed permits; and a detailed look at the project's "customer group" and environmental impacts.

Critical to the application will be our Green Team's plan for education and outreach – how we'll use our solar system to teach and inspire other community members and groups about the sun's potential to power our homes, businesses, churches and government buildings. We've got a subcommittee working on a creative, multi-disciplinary approach to that outreach, and are excited about its potential to also spread the good news about First Church throughout Missoula – and beyond.

Stay tuned as we update you on our progress each week! If you have any ideas you'd like to share for education and outreach, give Sherry Devlin a call or drop her an email: 406-546-1016 or sherrydevlin@gmail.com.

In the meantime, we've also got to come up with the final \$8,500 we need to reach that \$20K target for pledges. That's where all of you come in. We've designated March as Recruit a Friend Month at First Church. If you've already made a pledge to our solar campaign, recruit a friend or pew-mate to the effort. If you haven't yet made a pledge, do so now – AND THEN recruit a friend to do the same before month's end.

For a \$250 pledge, you can buy one of the estimated 80 solar panels we'll need to provide First Church's electricity. But you can also pledge \$125 for a half-panel, or any other amount that fits with your budget. This past week, a generous First Church member bought three panels for \$750; the previous week, a congregation member bought 10 panels for \$2,500!

To make your pledge, contact Green Team co-chair Jim Gillison at (406) 546-1359 or by email at james.gillison@msn.com, or talk to any other member of the Green Team, Pastor John or Genevieve in the church office.