

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

### **21 First Church members have pledged to help bring solar power to our building!**

This week, a very generous donor from our First Church congregation pledged \$2,500 to the quest to bring solar power to our building. That's enough to buy 10 panels!

We are so thankful for this donor and 20 others who made pledges over the past month, jump-starting our fundraising and inspiring us all to do more. In all, we have collected \$8,875 in pledges – very near the halfway mark in our \$20,000 campaign.

These pledges will make a significant difference as we apply for a \$70,000 renewable energy grant from NorthWestern Energy this spring, as it shows our congregation's deep commitment to the project.

In addition, we have applied for a \$1,500 grant from the Methodist Church's Mountain Sky Conference, which recently announced a grant program to local churches finance energy projects. Ours was the first application they received!

And this Sunday – aka Super Bowl Sunday – we'll bring our fundraising to the congregation via Zoon, Facebook Live and in person. You won't want to miss this opportunity to hear the latest on our proposal, and to add your name to the roster of those who have pledged to help.

Here's the gist of what we've accomplished so far:

In late December, Ralph Walters of SBS Solar met with Pastor John Daniels, members of the Green Team and two former trustees about a possible solar array atop our church's roof. Walters said his preliminary analysis shows the installation of 80 solar panels on the education annex would offset about 90 percent of the church's electrical consumption.

Walters has considerable experience helping nonprofit groups and churches apply for NorthWestern Energy's renewable energy grants, which typically provide 70 percent of a solar installation's cost. Most systems pay for themselves in 10-12 years, he said. But with help from NorthWestern, our array could pay for itself in about 3 years! The savings on our monthly electric bills would begin on Day One.

This week's warm, sunny days helped our cause, providing access to the roof for Walters – who needs to make measurements to prepare a final design and consult with a structural engineer on the roof's stability. Once those reports are complete – we hope by month's end – Walters will bring First Church and its trustees a formal proposal, showing the system design, cost and estimated payoff period.

What a way to start 2022! First Church has an opportunity to lead a green energy project in the heart of Missoula – one that moves our community away from fossil fuels and into a 100 percent electric future. Thanks to all who are joining us in this effort!

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