



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

SBS Solar Delivers Plan for First Church Solar Array

The sun is shining on 300 East Main Street! This week, First Church received a formal proposal from Missoula's SBS Solar to install solar panels atop our roof.

Here are the details, as provided by Ralph Walters, SBS Solar's general manager. After taking measurements on the roof of our Education Annex, Walters determined that it will accommodate 66 solar panels. That's enough to provide 80 percent of First Church's electrical needs!

Although the usable space is smaller than he originally estimated, Walters said new developments in solar technology will make up for some of the lost production. The solar modules he'll use on our building will create energy from both sides of the panels,

providing 10-15 percent more power. In all, they'll generate 34,000 kWh per year from the sun!

Walters' design also includes a ballasted roof mount structure, which eliminates roof penetration for the solar module mounting and can withstand 100 mph winds. That's critical, given our church's location in the path of Missoula's fierce Hellgate Canyon winds.

Total system cost will be \$66,175. SBS will donate \$1,500 of its time, bringing the price down to \$64,675.

With Walters' assistance, First Church's Green Team will apply for a NorthWestern Energy grant of \$46,322 – or 70 percent of the solar system's cost. Our congregation and other grants will provide the remaining \$18,353.

Green Team members are at work on our portion of the grant application; deadline for submission is May 1. The application will include not only the technical details and costs for the system, but an education and outreach plan for sharing our newfound solar knowledge with the congregation, other building users and the larger Missoula community.

So now is the time to bring home our fundraising campaign – to show NorthWestern Energy our commitment to the project. As of Wednesday, we have 33 pledges from First Church members and friends, totaling \$13,375. That means we have about \$5,000 left to raise before we submit our grant application. We can reach that mark with everyone's help. Let's do this!

March is "Recruit a Friend Month" in our campaign to generate First Church's electricity using solar power. If you've already made a pledge, now's the time to spread the

good news to your friends, relatives, and Sunday morning Zoom- and pew-mates.

A pledge of \$250 buys one solar panel, but any amount is a significant help in this effort. We are only collecting pledges at this point. We won't request any actual money until the project is at full funding – via pledges and grants – and has final approval from our church's Board of Trustees.

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.