

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

Solar pledges hit one-third of goal!

First Church members are responding to our call for pledges to help place 80 solar panels atop our church building. Already, we've received 19 pledges from individuals and families, totaling \$6,375. That puts us about one-third of the way to our \$20,000 goal.

Thank you so much to all who have pledged thus far. We are humbled by your generosity and inspired by your willingness to take direct action to protect our planet from the damage inflicted by burning fossil fuels, the No. 1 cause of global warming.

Of course, we know that raising the remaining two-thirds of the money will be much tougher, but we are a determined lot! We are 100 percent committed to First UMC's Climate Covenant, which implores us to "elevate climate action, and with it social justice, as a primary focus of our ministry." But we need your help. At this point, we are only seeking pledges. For \$250, you can buy a solar panel, although any amount helps the cause.

In the meantime, the Green Team is pursuing all possible funding avenues. In addition to pledges from our congregation, we are asking the many nonprofit groups that regularly use our building to contribute to the project. Their gatherings and offices account for a significant percentage of our electrical use in these pandemic times when in-person church activities are limited.

And we have applied for a \$1,500 grant from the United Methodist Church's Mountain Sky Conference. Bishop Karen Oliveto got the ball rolling last April when she approved a new conference-wide Creation Justice Task Force. Then, at the 2021 annual conference, a collection was taken to help provide startup funds that could help individual congregations launch green initiatives or expand upon existing projects. We think our church's solar project fits perfectly with the new grant program's requirements; Green Team leader Jim Gillison wrote and submitted our application this past week.

We hope you'll join us in this critical project to put our church on the path to 100 percent clean electricity. To make your pledge, contact Jim Gillison at (406) 546-1359 or by email at james.gillison@msn.com, or talk to any member of the Green Team, Pastor John or Genevieve in the church office. Let's go solar, First Church! It's the right thing to do.