

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

Let's Bring Home the Final \$4,378 in Solar Pledges!

Members of First UMC's Green Team are inspired and energized by the support we've received from across the community in recent weeks.

As of Thursday, the campaign to raise \$18,353 to buy rooftop solar panels for First Church reported \$13,975 in pledges.

That means it's time to bring home the final \$4,378 in pledges we need to submit our application for a \$46,322 renewable energy grant from NorthWestern Energy. The power company wants to see strong evidence of our commitment to the project; the 70-30 split of project costs between our congregation and the company represents that level of involvement. (See the full project plan and cost breakdown [at this link](#) on our First Church website.)

The past two weeks have been heartening. One family in our congregation increased their pledge from \$250 to \$1,000 – a significant boost for which we are very grateful. Six other families offered brand new pledges.

Yet another pledge came from a community member who attended our March 6 Sunday service. Dorcie Kafka Dvarishkis, archdeacon of the Episcopal Diocese of Montana, made her pledge in celebration of the Kafka family of Montana's Hi-Line. She grew up in Van Orsdel Methodist Church in Havre.

Archdeacon Dvarishkis brought news that Missoula's Holy Spirit Episcopal Church recently installed solar panels – with help from a NorthWestern Energy grant, a Diocesan grant and parishioners'

gifts. “It’s already speaking in return and neighborhood conversations,” she wrote. “Good grace and gumption as you all move forward on behalf of all God’s children.”

These calls to action came as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a stunning report. For the first time, the IPCC focused on the inequities inherent in climate change – racial, wealth-based and intergenerational. Rich countries produce most of the carbon emissions that are baking Earth’s atmosphere; poor countries suffer the most severe consequences and are least able to adapt to change.

The intergenerational inequities affect us all. Those people age 55 and older – most of the people now in power – will not live to see the most extreme consequences of continued greenhouse gas emissions. “It is today’s children whose lives will be defined by the problems their parents failed to solve,” the IPCC report said. Those aged 29 and younger “will see a fivefold increase in extreme events if the world warms 3 degrees Celsius (5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.” [Washington Post 2/28/2022](#)

The time to act was yesterday. But action today can still have an impact. The most sweeping actions must come from national leaders – big-picture changes with big-dollar price tags, the IPCC said. But millions of individual actions are also essential, and that is where Missoula’s downtown United Methodist Church and our solar panel project enters the picture. We can reduce our electric consumption by 80 percent by installing solar panels on the roof of our education annex. That’s something real – a first step we can take as a congregation.

So let’s get busy. Make your pledge to First Church’s solar panel project by contacting Green Team co-chair Jim Gillison at (406) 546-1359 or by emailing james.gillison@msn.com.

