

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

Your solar pledge makes a difference for the planet!

"Each one of us has a role to play, no matter how small. Every day, we make some impact on the planet. And the cumulative effect of millions of small ethical actions will truly make a difference." Jane Goodall, "The Book of Hope"

Members of First United Methodist have a chance to make a difference for the planet by installing 80 solar panels on the church's roof, Green Team leaders Carole Addis and Jim Gillison told the congregation last Sunday.

"We can trade fossil fuels for sunshine," said Carole, who led the presentation with Jane Goodall's call for "millions of small ethical actions."

The response was heartening. By day's end, members of First Church had pledged \$5,625 toward the Green Team's \$20,000 goal.

Jim and Carole provided background on the solar proposal:

First UMC is working with a local company, SBS Solar, to design an 80-panel array atop the church's education wing. That process includes an inspection of the roof by SBS and a structural engineer to be certain the building will support the load.

By the end of February, Ralph Walters of SBS will present the church with a formal proposal, including design and cost. Walters also is working with Green Team members on the church's application for a NorthWestern Energy grant that could provide up

to 70 percent of the project cost. The remaining \$20,000 would come from our congregation's pledges and other possible grant sources.

If we divide that \$20,000 by the 80 solar panels, we need \$250 per panel. Pledge \$250, and you've purchased one panel! Or buy a half-panel for \$125. Any amount of pledge will make a difference. (We only need pledges at present, no actual money.)

During last Sunday's presentation, Jim reminded the congregation that First Church has been an iconic presence in downtown Missoula since the first commercial buildings and lumber mills appeared along the Clark Fork River in the 1800s. A rooftop solar array would reassert that presence for the 21st century, a visible symbol of our church's commitment to a livable planet.

This is our opportunity, individually and collectively, to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that are overheating Earth's atmosphere and upending our environment, Carole said. This is our "Jane Goodall moment" – our chance to inspire change and hope right here at home.

"We can set the tone and lead the way, and other nonprofits across the city will do the same thing – because it's the right thing to do," said Jim.

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.