

First United Methodist's Green Team says: Recruit a Friend to Our Pledge Drive!

March is "Recruit a Friend Month" for our campaign to raise \$20,000 to generate First Church's electricity using solar power.

What does that mean? 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. As in: "Hey, have you heard that our church wants to put solar panels on top of the Education Annex? Did you know they could generate 90 percent of our building's electricity?"

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.

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, we passed the halfway mark in February. Now – with your help – our goal is to reach \$15,000 in pledges by April 1.

That would leave us with a final \$5,000 in pledges to secure by May 1, when we must submit our application for a NorthWestern Energy renewable energy grant. We'll ask NorthWestern for \$70,000 to help buy and install the solar array; the company will likely ask us to contribute another \$20,000 to show our commitment to the project. Together, NorthWestern's grant plus our contribution would pay the full project cost.

First Church's Green Team is leaving no stone unturned in the quest for grants and pledges. In February, we applied for a \$1,500 energy grant from the Mountain Sky Conference – a

program just launched by our conference's Creation Care committee. We are investigating other state and regional grant sources as well.

Also in February, Pastor John Daniels and Green Team Co-chair Jim Gillison wrote to all the social service, civic and nonprofit groups that utilize our building each week, asking if they would consider donating to the cause.

“Should your organization be willing to pledge a financial contribution toward the purchase of a solar panel (or part of one), you may do so with the knowledge that this investment is projected to save our church 90 percent in monthly electrical costs which would otherwise rely upon the burning of fossil fuels,” the letter said. “Please note: There is no requirement or expectation for all groups to engage in this project, but we have heard from several great interest in this project, and an affirmation that they would like to support what we are up to.”

We need your help! Let's reach \$15,000 in pledges by April 1. 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.