

# *Stewards of Creation*



*Sharing Ways To Care for Our Earth*

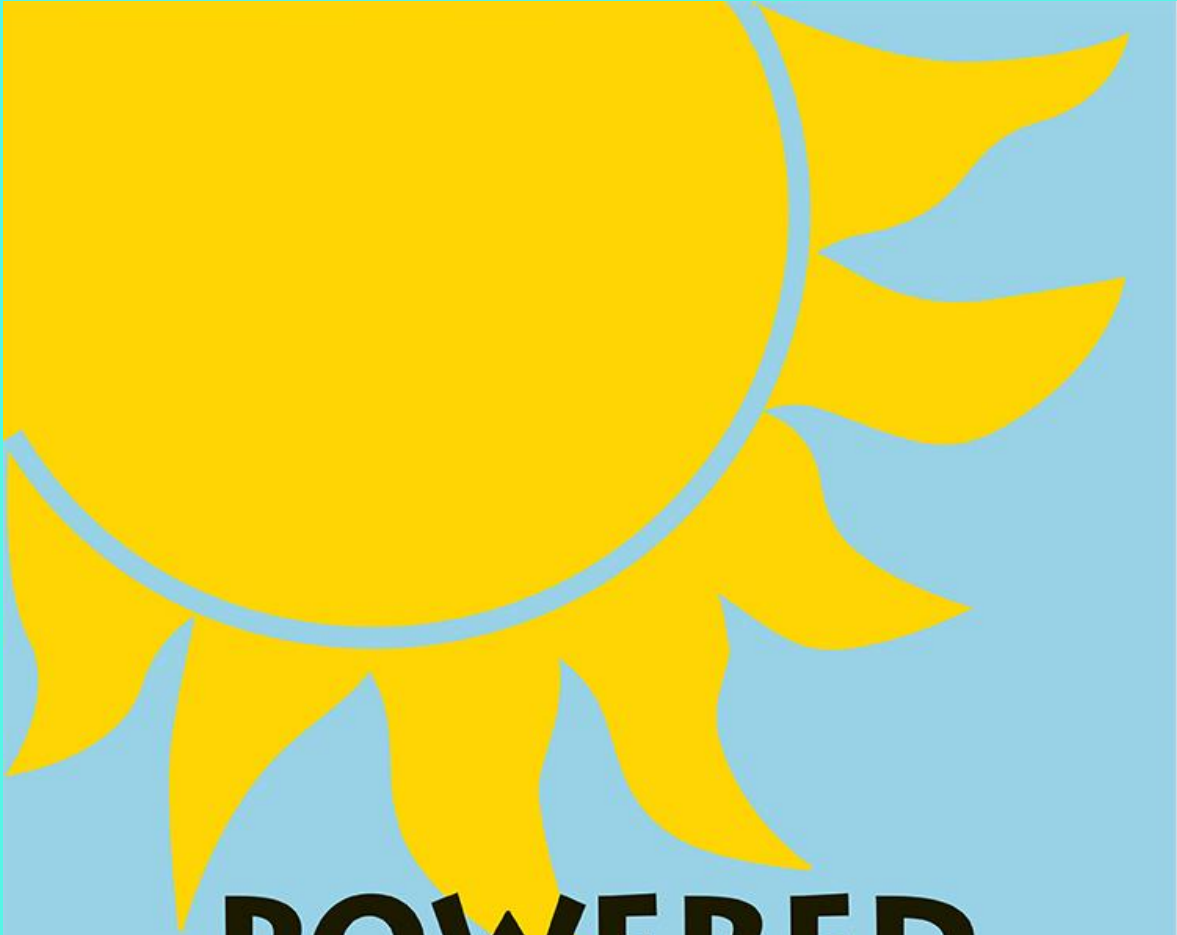
**On February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, nearly 50 people, including a dozen local clergy, attended the Stewards of Creation gathering at Sherwood Oaks Christina Church of Bloomington to share our common call to care for creation.**



Members of 24 Bloomington-area congregations stand for a photo at the end of the Stewards of Creation event Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025, at Sherwood Oaks Christian Church. *Carol Kugler/Herald-Times*

Attendees spoke about how people need to sustain and renew the Earth; God's creation is to be respected, protected and cared for; all people are partners in the ongoing work of creation; God does not want people to waste what Allah has provided; people need to recommit to responsible stewardship of Earth's resources; people of faith have a responsibility to adjust their patterns of acquisition and consumption to keep climate change in check; and people of faith must ask for forgiveness and begin simplifying their lifestyles to be more environmentally conscious.

# **RENEWABLE ENERGY**



**POWERED  
BY THE SUN**

**SIRENSOLAR.ORG**

# **The Solar Congregations in Monroe County**

**Christ Community Church**

**Community Beth Shalom**

**First Presbyterian Church**

**First United Church**

**Friends Meeting**

**St. John the Apostle Catholic Church**

**St. Mark's United Methodist Church**

**St. Thomas Lutheran Church**

**Trinity Episcopal Church**

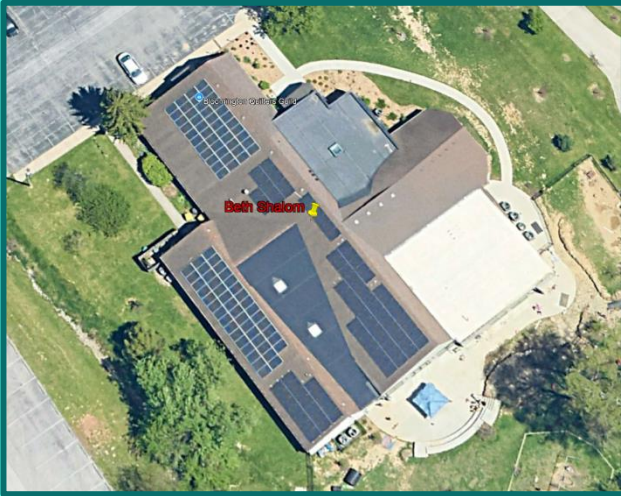
**Unitarian Universalist Church**

**Unity of Bloomington**



# Solar Panel Placement Options

**Angled Roof**  
Beth Shalom



**Flat Roof**  
Trinity Episcopal



**Ground**  
Unity



**Of the eleven congregations in Monroe County have gone solar, *none of them* had to use their own operating funds.**

**Instead, they used:**

- **\$25,000 SEEL grant from the city**
- **\$25,000 grant from Creation Care Partners**
- **Funds from Earth Care Bloomington**
- **Unsolicited donations from enthusiastic congregants**

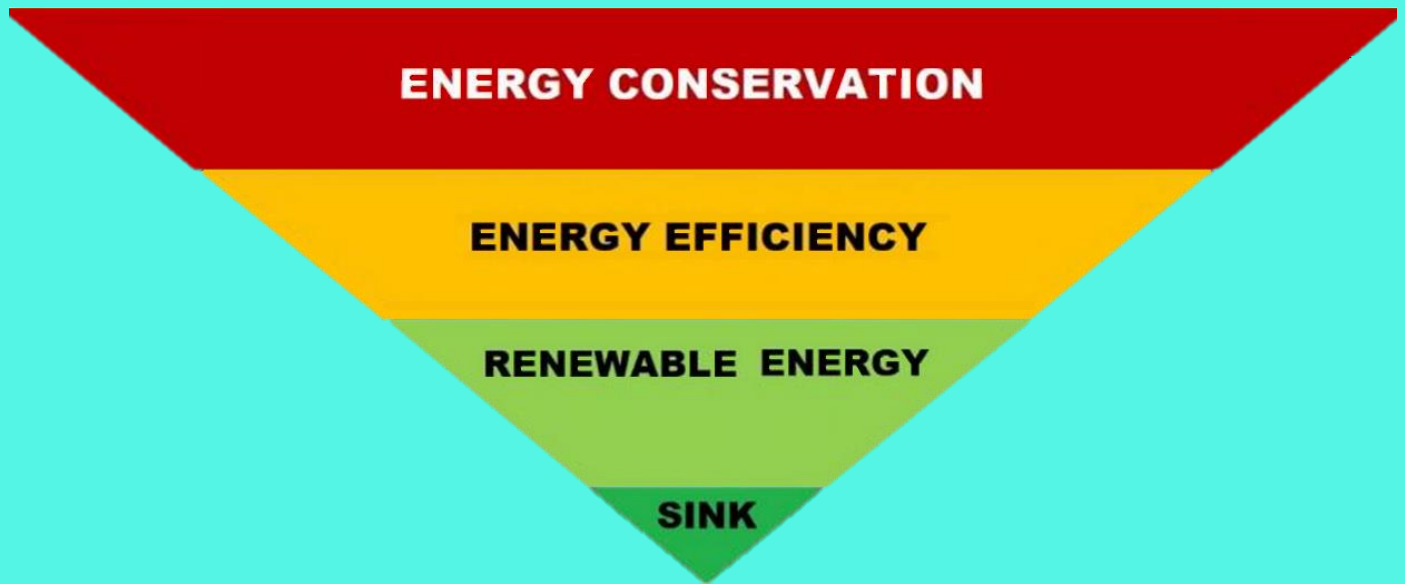
**And only six received grants to kick start their project!**

**If you are considering adding solar, SIREN members can:**

- Walk you through the process.**
- Send a team to your congregation.**
- Share documents and experience.**
- Provide technical support.**

**Contact us at: <https://www.sirensolar.org/>**

# Priorities for Saving Energy and Money



**Whether or not you decide to add solar panels, you can save energy and money through Energy Conservation and Efficiency.**

**This graphic shows the priorities for actions that saving energy and money.**

# Many steps cost little or nothing



## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Track Monthly Energy Usage**

**Seal Attics, Doors, Windows**

**Install Programmable Thermostats**

**Do you have several HVAC Zones?**



# Convert to LEDs

ENERGY CONSERVATION

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SINK

In Sanctuaries,  
Fellowship Halls,  
Corridors and Offices



EXIT signs are on 24/7,  
so LED signs  
quickly pay  
for themselves



Install occupancy  
sensors and timers



Reduce the length of time  
lights ~and fans!~ are on.

## Local examples of savings

One congregation replaced (52) 80-Watt halogen with 18-Watt LEDs. They paid for the upgrade in 20 months. Then saved \$335 or more each year.

Another congregation converted the incandescent lights in their offices and sanctuary to LEDs and reduced their annual cost by \$7,700 a year.

LEDs in Existing  
Fixtures



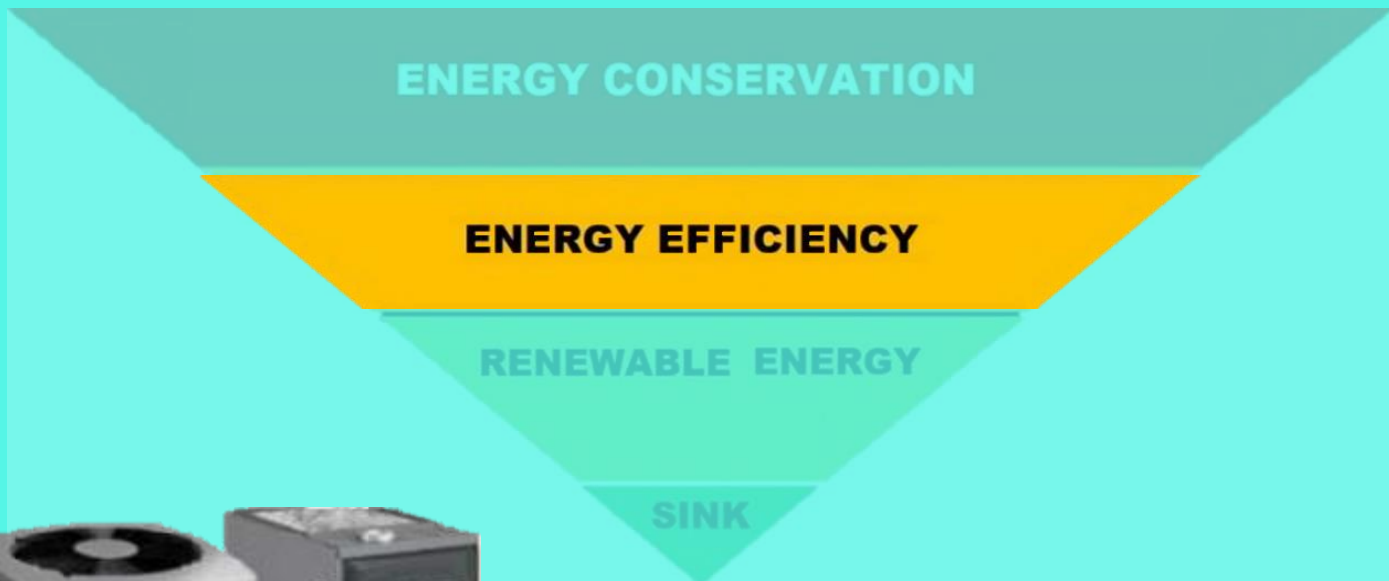
New  
LED Fixtures

Their investment paid for itself in under two and a half years. And they've saved on electricity costs in each of the following years.

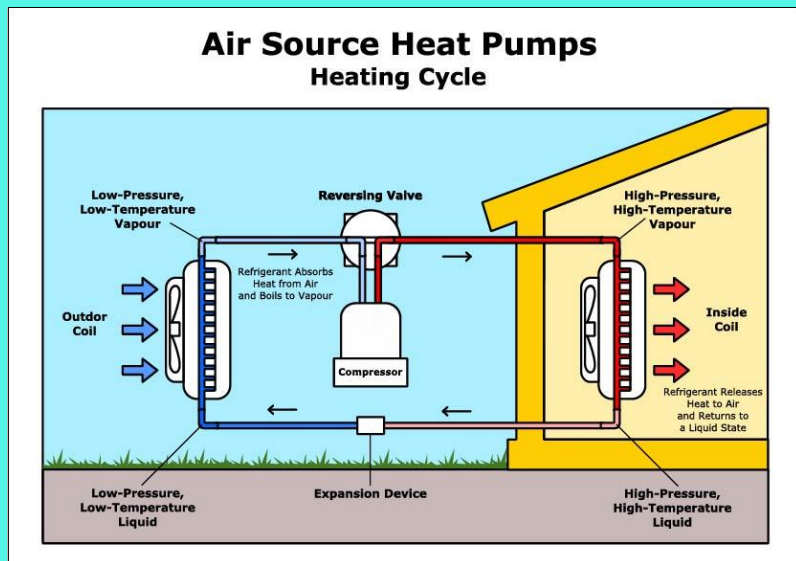
**Both congregations will save even more as electric rates are raised.**

# Investments that can pay for themselves

## HVAC UPGRADES



### How Electric Air Source Heat Pumps Work

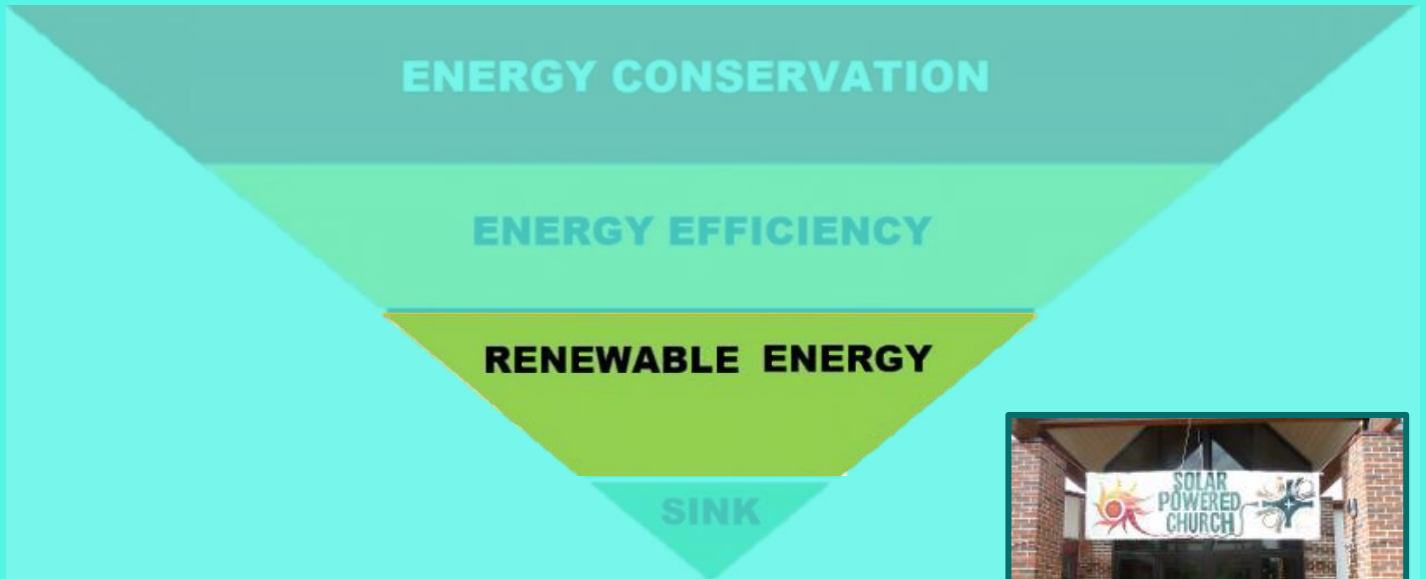


Post Signs to Prevent Overriding Thermostats

The Center for Congregations has grant opportunities:

<https://centerforcongregations.org/resource-grants/>

# DECIDING TO GO SOLAR



## Celebrating Together!

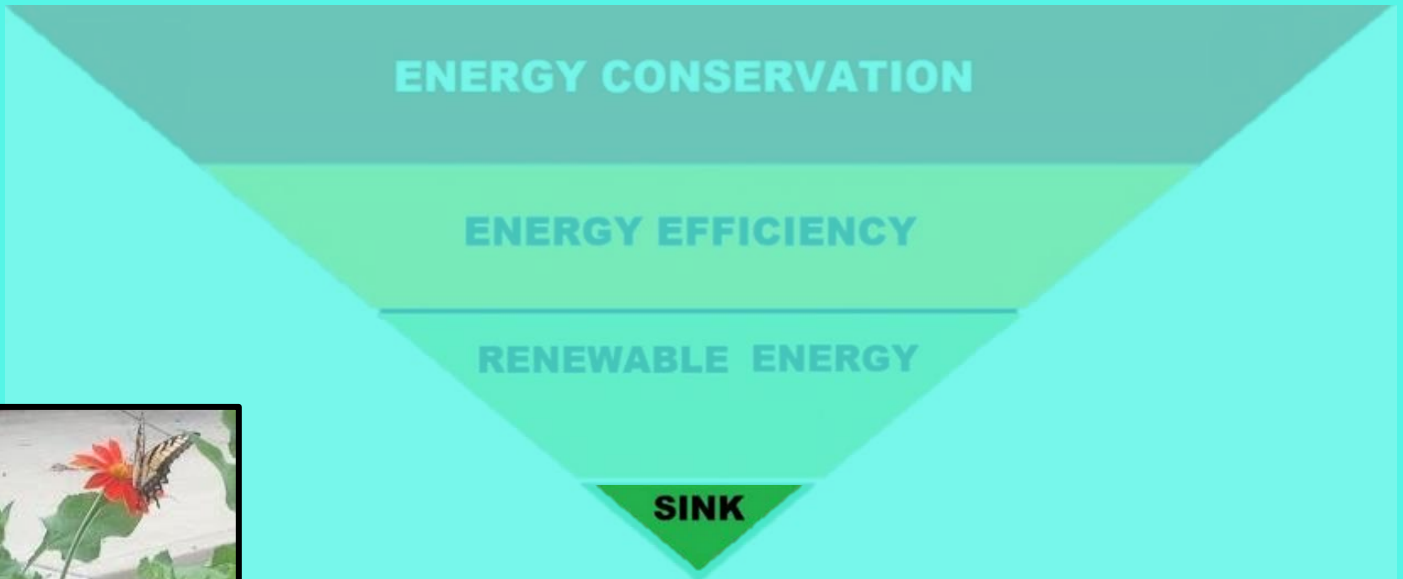


## Inspire Your Congregants!



# CARBON SEQUESTRATION (“SINK”)

Planting native trees, or a monarch garden, starting a community garden won't save energy or money



...but it is a visible way to show that your congregation cares for Creation and our community.



And you can involve your youth!



...and our community.

**Following these steps, six congregations reduced their average electric usage by 33% and their gas usage by 36% from the date each started making improvements:**

<b>Six houses of worship:</b>	<b>CBS</b>	<b>ECC</b>	<b>STLC</b>	<b>TEC</b>	<b>UUB</b>	<b>UII</b>	<b>Avg.</b>
<b>Electricity</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Gas</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>36%</b>

**Katharine Hayhoe asked why would we worry if people don't talk about it?**

**“Who can talk about it with people they share interests with better than scientists?”**

***you!***

**Taking some of these steps**

**~ and talking about what you are doing ~**

**will energize your congregation.**

**Katharine Hayhoe asked why would we  
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**And she asked, "who can talk about it with people  
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**Taking some of these steps**

**~ and talking about what you are doing ~**

**will energize your congregation to take  
steps in their own lives.**

**“Hope is believing in spite of the evidence, and then watching the evidence change”**

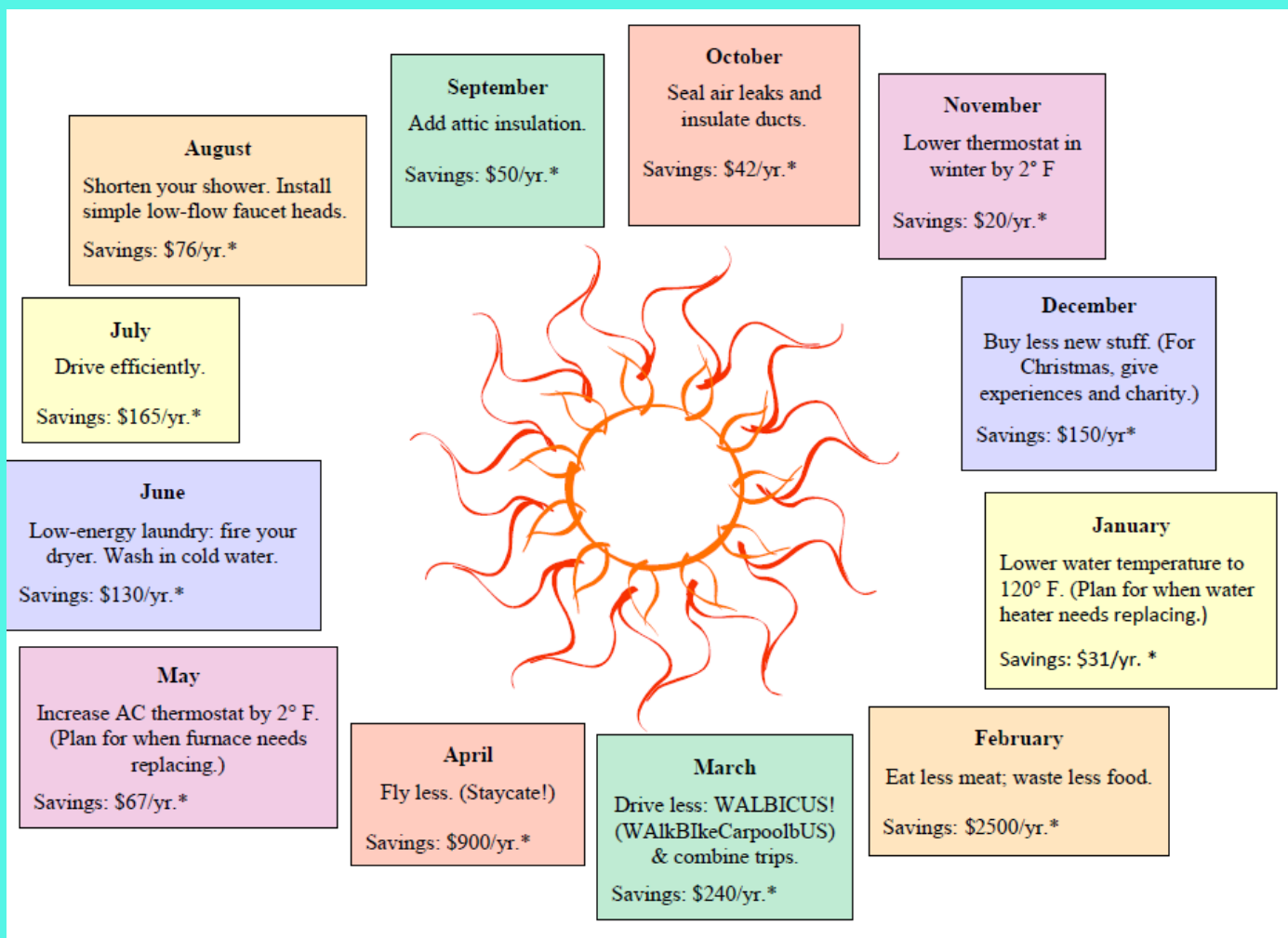
**Hebrews 11:1, as interpreted  
by Rev. Jim Wallis**

# 1) Using God-Given Resources Prudently:

## Task of the Month Programs

### A) Creation Care Partners

- Motivating online survey
- Monthly action sheets
- Optional support sessions
- Electric monitor slides
- and more







## GET OUT OF HOT WATER JANUARY ENERGY ACTION SHEET

This month's projected annual savings: up to \$112; 2.1% of energy use

**HEATING WATER ACCOUNTS FOR ALMOST ONE FIFTH OF A TYPICAL HOUSEHOLD'S DIRECT ENERGY USE.** It's second only to heating and air conditioning.

**This month, save water, energy, and money:**

- **Install [faucet aerators](#) & [low-flow showerheads](#), [It's simple – here's how](#).** These reduce the water used by up to 60%, maintain water pressure, & pay for themselves within a year.
- **Shorten showers to five minutes.** You'll use less than half the water of a bath. Typically, washing ourselves uses more hot water than anything else in our homes.
- **If you own your water heater, plan for what you'll replace it with when it reaches the end of its life.** New water heaters can use just half the energy of old ones. When your old one fails (BRRRR!), you'll want to replace it quickly!



References available upon request from [CreationCarePartners@gmail.com](mailto:CreationCarePartners@gmail.com). This info sheet employs the Task of the Month concept developed by Dr. Stephanie Kimball for Earth Care, an affiliate of Hoosier Interfaith Power & Light.

## HOW TO DO IT: CONSIDERING WATER HEATERS

**Electric tanks compared:** Highly efficient, a [hybrid electric](#) (a heat pump water heater) costs more than a **standard electric**, uses two thirds less energy and also dehumidifies. In the example below, it pays for its higher up-front cost with savings in four years and, in ten years, saves \$2000. A hybrid needs a space that is at least seven feet high and an area of at least 700 cubic feet. In a cold climate, it is best installed in an unheated space. In a warm climate, it reduces the need for AC if it is installed in space that you cool with AC.

**Natural gas (NG) tanks compared:** A **conventional EnergyStar** NG tank saves a little compared to a **standard** NG tank.

**Tankless and tanks compared:** A tankless makes sense where space is tight and hot water use is low. Its energy savings can quickly make up for its higher purchase price. With a tankless, a household that uses 41 or less gallons per day may reduce its energy use by 24% to 34%. One that uses 85 gallons may cut by 8% to 14%. Electric tankless heaters use more energy than hybrid electrics and [require an electrical upgrade](#). [Utility companies may start charging for the burden tankless electrics impose on the grid](#).

This table gives a **relative** sense of different technologies for a household of four. Actual figures will vary depending on the model, utility rates and water use.

### An Example of Costs, Savings and Energy Use: A Household of Four

	Gas			Electric		
	Standard	Energy Star	Tankless	Standard	Hybrid	Tankless
Purchase price	\$640	\$676	\$711	\$409	\$1,210	\$703
Annual operating cost	\$284	\$280	\$228	\$419	\$104	NA
Total 10-year cost	\$3,480	\$3,476	\$2,991	\$4,599	\$2,250	NA
10-year savings		\$4	\$485		\$2,260	NA
Payback period (years)		9 years	2.8 years		2.5 years	NA
Energy factor	0.65	0.68	0.81	0.93	3.75	NA

Assumes: \$.12 per kWh, \$1.09 per therm. A high energy factor indicates higher efficiency. Savings and payback periods are relative to the standard models. Installation costs not included.

#### Estimated Savings

Reduce showers to five minutes or less  
 Install low-flow aerators and showerheads  
 Replace standard gas with a tankless OR  
 a standard electric with a hybrid electric

#### Energy Footprint Financial

1.1% \$59  
 1.0% \$53  
 4.8% \$110  
 \$220

Notes: Assumes 3-person household. Water heater switches: 10 years annualized.



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## B) Earth Care Bloomington

Monthly fliers on the Earth Care website include links to local and national resources

### Ways We Each Can Make a Difference

### TASK OF THE MONTH

After months of record-breaking global temperatures and increasing weather-related disasters, many of us are troubled about the future for life on Earth.

**Task of the Month** is a program to help individuals and households take one action each month. Tasks were selected based on their potential for significant energy savings. Most suggestions are for improving homes or changing habits to reduce our carbon footprints, but **advocacy** is also an important way we can make a difference. Do whatever works for you!

Following this program together **will strengthen our sense of community**. And our joint actions can influence others to make a real difference.

**Fliers on Earth Care's website will suggest ways we can take actions each month:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Month</b>	<b>Suggested Monthly Tasks* and Actions</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> January	Talk about climate change. <i>Learn how <b>Citizens Climate Lobby</b> advocates for change.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> February	Eat green. Plan meals, buy local and compost to reduce waste.
<input type="checkbox"/> March	Be energy smart. How much power are your appliances and lights using?
<input type="checkbox"/> April	Learn how solar can work for you. Advocate for Community Solar.
<input type="checkbox"/> May	Shift your ride. Reduce the impact of your local and long-distance travel.
<input type="checkbox"/> June	Stay cool wisely. Adjust your thermostat to save energy and money.
<input type="checkbox"/> July	Be water wise. Install low-flow showerheads & faucet aerators.
<input type="checkbox"/> August	Reduce the use of plastic & paper. Adopt earth-friendly cleaning methods.
<input type="checkbox"/> September	Reduce the impact of doing laundry. Wash in cold water, air-dry clothes.
<input type="checkbox"/> October	Be heat wise. Try gradually lowering your thermostat.
<input type="checkbox"/> November	Plan greener giving. Give things people need, used items, local memberships.
<input type="checkbox"/> December	Celebrate your accomplishments!



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In January

## Talk about climate change

The most important thing every single one of us can do about climate change is talk about it —



**why it matters to us, and how we can fix it;\***

~Dr; Katharine Hayhoe

<https://www.katharinehayhoe.com/>

Yale's Program on Climate Change Communications found that 74% of voters trust family & friends as sources of climate information; But 66% say they rarely or never discuss the issue with family and friends;



**\*If this is not easy for you to do try taking a few deep breaths and practice your deep listening skills!**

Dr; Hayhoe suggests looking for a person's interests, ask them about it, and point out ways climate change has impacted it;



**Let's do this for our children!** Science Moms provides unbiased facts about climate change;  
<https://sciencemoms.com/>

## TASK OF THE MONTH

## ... and **advocate** for change!



Citizens Climate Lobby

**We need change at the national level; and together we have a much bigger impact than we could individually by:**

- Starting productive conversations about climate solutions in our community;
- Getting more people talking about solutions;
- Building support for climate action with community leaders;

Citizens Climate Lobby members meet with their members of Congress across Indiana to advocate for effective climate solutions; UUCB members helped form the first Indiana chapter and spread chapters across the state!

**Have some time? Join CCL to connect with local members and receive weekly briefings with suggested actions;**



<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



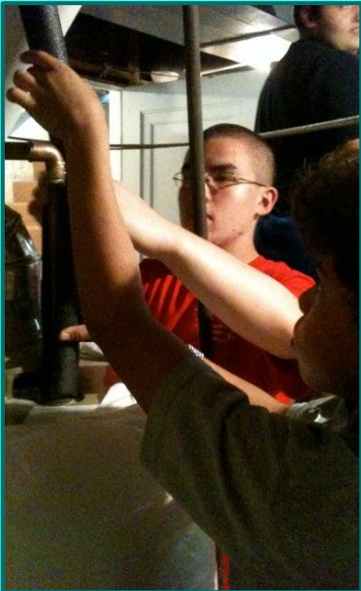
**These programs aim to help households reduce their energy use by 14% to 25%.**

***This is very doable!***

**Household Reductions In Local Congregations Supported By These Programs:**

Congregation	CBS	ECC	STLC	TEC	UUB	UII	Avg.
Energy Reduction	22%	28%	22%	29%	30%	30%	27%

**Your youth can be involved**

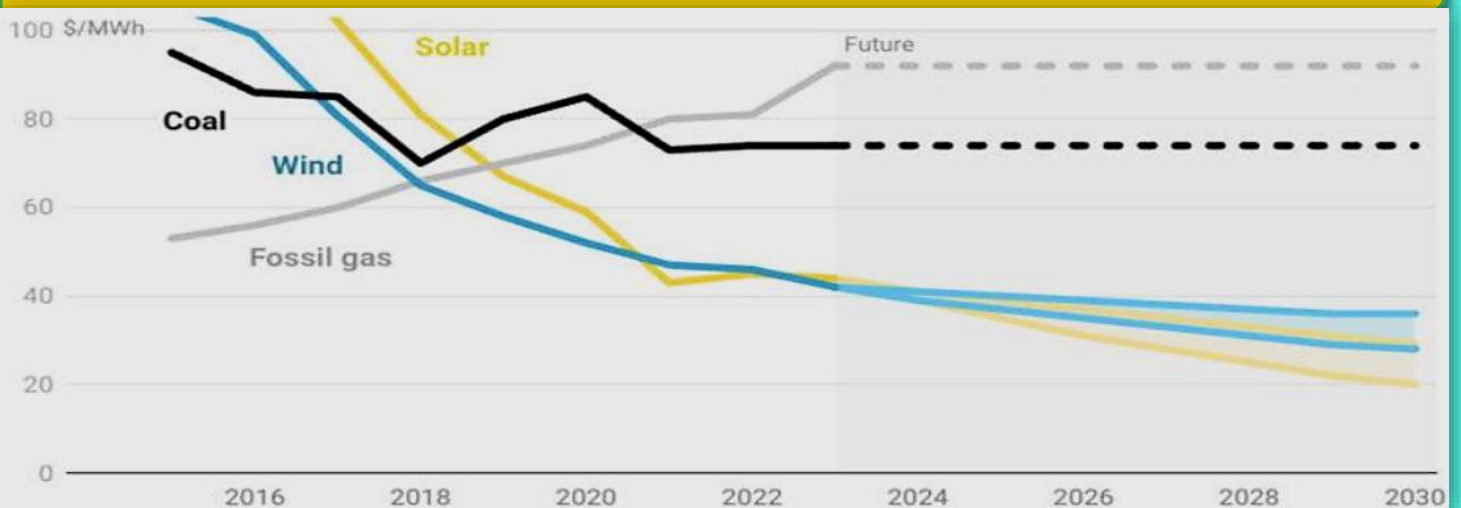


## 2) Shifting to Clean Energy:

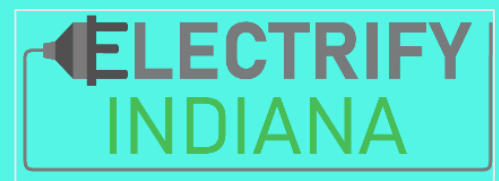
### Educating to Electrify

**Our electricity will become clean. Will we?**

Electricity from renewables is now cheaper than fossil fuels.



But many of our appliances are powered by gas, oil and propane.



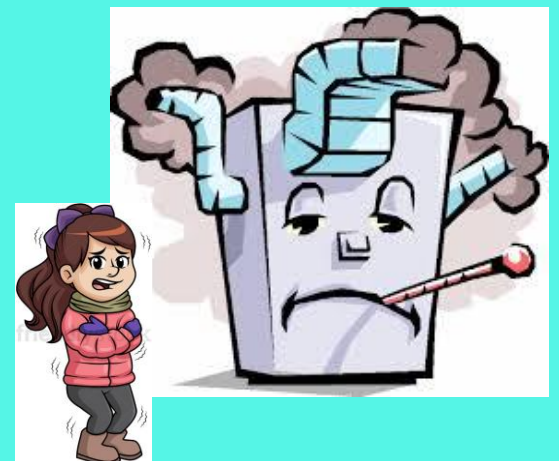
# **Electrifying our households is a key way to care for Creation**

**“Forty-two percent of U.S. energy-related emissions come from our homes and the machines we use every day: the cars we drive, how we heat and cool our homes, how we heat our water, dry our clothes, and cook our meals.**

**- Rewiring America**

**When an essential household appliance  
breaks down, the pressure's on to replace it**

**– fast!**





# **“Educating to Electrify” Program for Congregations**

- 1. To introduce congregants to the idea:**
  - A simple PowerPoint conveying the basics
  - Training and support of a lay presenter
- 2. Access to nuts and bolts help when needed**

To get started, contact us at:  
[ElectrifyIndiana@gmail.com](mailto:ElectrifyIndiana@gmail.com)