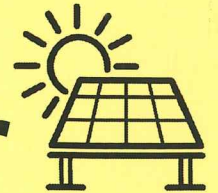


“sun-K.I.S.S.’d”

Keep It Simple Solar



Bethlehem needs a new roof on both the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall (FH). Those roofs are over 25-30 years old and will cost less if replaced at the same time. BLC Council has voted to replace both roofs this year. A company recommended by several churches in Michigan (Solar Faithful, a subsidiary of Chart House Energy) can help us install atop the new FH roof a **23-Kilowatt solar panel array to save BLC as much as \$3500-4500/year in electricity, or upwards of \$100,000 or more total** for the life of the FH roof and solar panels. The panels are made in the U.S.A. and rated to last 40+ years, the same lifespan of the highest quality roof shingle option selected by Council, from Northshore Roofing in Traverse City.

Bethlehem Council created a “**Solar Subcommittee**” in the fall of 2023 (Dale Wentzloff, Norm Fred, Pastor Paul, Scott Farley and Paul Wiemerslage.) The Subcommittee has researched Solar Faithful and its offerings for months, has gathered positive testimonials from other churches who partnered with Solar Faithful and Chart House, and sought the advice of an attorney to examine the vendor contract provided to Bethlehem and assess the feasibility of each of the solar options. If BLC votes to go solar, two options the solar committee and attorney recommends are listed below. We ask that you consider this opportunity.

•**Option 1** would **essentially cost BLC nothing**. This is called a **Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)** because while we benefit from a small percentage of power savings, investors will actually purchase the panels. In short, the PPA provides Chart House Energy free real estate for its panels on our roof... allowing outside investors to absorb our risk, insure the materials, and finance and profit from rebates and a larger portion of the electricity savings. **Pro** – *The PPA is free for BLC, and we do reap some solar savings here;* **Con** - *We save only about 8-10% on power/year, roughly \$32,000 total for the life of the FH roof and panels.*

•**Option 2** would have **Bethlehem purchase the panel array outright**, called a **Direct Purchase option**. **Pro** – *With BLC owning the panels, we would save 40-45% on power for the projected 40-year life of the FH roof and panels. Though BLC would spend an additional \$75k upfront, we would recoup as much as \$42k of costs from federal rebates, making the solar panel array net cost as low as \$33,000;* **Con** - *BLC spends \$33+k more than we would have on the FH roof alone. (With the sale of the rental house last year, we have the liquidity to do this and still have significant funds left over.) The rebates are impressive, the timing is right, and this investment is emphatically considered the “best option” by the Solar Subcommittee.*

What might a vote/ballot(s) look like at our February 25th Congregational Meeting?

Here again, we want to “Keep It Simple, Solar.” When we meet on the 25th, we plan to spend just a few minutes going over the basics above, then have the **president of Solar Faithful, Rob Rafson, available in-person** to answer any remaining questions. We will conclude with **one or two rounds of voting**.

The first ballot question may be something like:

Should Bethlehem Lutheran Church install solar panels on the fellowship hall roof? Yes or No

If the first ballot results in a Yes, we would proceed to a second ballot with this question:

Should Bethlehem move forward with Option 2 to purchase solar panels outright? Yes or No

Any necessary details on the second ballot/question can be put up on the screen at this meeting.

*Additional solar project information is available in the STAR, church emails and the BLC Gathering Space.
Thank you for your time and consideration... for stewardship, care of Creation, and financial sustainability.*

- Your BLC Solar Subcommittee (Norm, Dale, Paul, Scott and Pr. Paul)