

## St. Paul's Solar Inaugural (and only) Annual Report

Solar power has been discussed for years at St. Paul's. We are perfectly situated to maximize solar power generation, with a large unobstructed steep pitch south facing roof. In March 2017 it came to the board's attention that there was an opportunity to apply for a grant through the EcoCity Edmonton Energy Transition Acceleration Grant program – a joint program funded by the City of Edmonton and the Ecotrust Foundation. We quickly pulled together an application using a previously submitted quote for a solar project and were successful in receiving \$25,000 towards a solar installation project. Suddenly the initiative had momentum! After an initial information session which confirmed significant community interest, an ad hoc committee of the board was formed, chaired by Justin Wheler with core members Clare Irwin, Bob Miller, and Chris Peet.

An information event was held after the service on June 4 to launch the project, answer questions, and vote on the design. While two designs with an integrated cross were considered, the congregation chose a simple rectangle. Funding pledges were collected from people wanting to “green their spiritual home” or give as a memorial. People were explicitly asked not to pledge if it would affect their other giving. Meanwhile quotes were requested from 3 vendors who had experience installing solar systems and strong references. A project budget of up to \$70,000 was set and sufficient pledges were received within the month of June to consider the project fully funded, in combination with the anticipated rebate from Energy Efficiency Alberta. The project was approved at a special congregation meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup> and the committee proceeded with contractor selection.

One additional vendor approached the church and was allowed to bid on the project over the summer. Lion Group Engineering and EPC helped the committee review and select a vendor. Based on their design and price, Skyfire energy was selected as the successful vendor to install a 27 kW system. In September, contracts were signed and permitting began. A full structural engineer assessment of the roof confirmed that it was safe to proceed. The municipal permitting process took much longer than anticipated as the church is considered a commercial building and commercial building permitting is significantly more extensive than residential solar permits (including a full site assessment including a search for abandoned wells). We received our permits for Christmas and the installation was completed during the balmy first weeks of January. The system officially started producing on January 22, 2018 and all inspections were completed by January 30<sup>th</sup>.

The general public including all members of St. Paul's United Church can now check out the system performance online at any time. Donor recognition will be made in the book of memorial gifts, and on the website which will also be displayed periodically on a new monitor in the friendship room.

Thank you to everyone for the tremendous support to pull this off in less than a year. The church is expected to be approximately a net zero electricity consumer from now on!

Respectfully submitted,

Justin Wheler