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Evangelical Churches In Indiana Can Get Solar Panels Through Grants

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A faith group aims to help put solar panels on 20 evangelical churches around the state and reduce energy use at some of their members' homes by 25 percent. Creation Care Partners hopes churches can put politics aside and do what's best for God's Earth.

Rev. Bob Whitaker is the senior pastor at Evangelical Community Church in Bloomington. He says the Earth is a gift from God and it's humanity's job to take care of it. Whitaker says it's also about helping your neighbor — air pollution disproportionately affects people who are low-income.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington has solar panels on its roof. These grants are hoping to target evangelical churches with an interest in solar.
Rebecca Thiele/IPB News

"So it seems like it's incumbent upon us who do have the means to implement the change on their behalf and it's for the benefit of all humanity," he says.

Whitaker says by reducing their energy costs, churches with solar panels can put more money toward serving others. He says it would also give churches more wiggle room in their budgets for crises like what we're seeing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Churches that receive the grants will also host solar and energy conservation workshops at other churches around the state.

Whitaker says he realizes many evangelicals see environmental stewardship as a political issue, but it doesn't have to be one.

"So let's take politics out of it and just ask what it means to be good stewards of the beautiful creation that God has given us," he says.

Funding for the $500,000 in grants for churches comes from a federal settlement against American Electric Power — which owns the Rockport coal plant — for past air pollution violations.

Faith communities interested in the grants for solar panels can contact Creation Care Partners through its website. It will start accepting applications in May.