

Hoosier churches receive \$500,000 to install solar panels

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INDIANAPOLIS – Twenty evangelical churches across Indiana will be awarded \$500,000 to install solar panels and cut energy use by 25%.

The grant money came from a settlement between American Electric Power (AEP) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and their goal is to cut back on energy use and use their extra funds for operations and mission work. The settlement included an agreement by AEP to invest \$3.5 million to improve air quality and to reduce pollution in Indiana through various projects.

Rev. Bob Whitaker is a senior pastor at a large evangelical church and chair of Creation Care Partners, the Indiana non-for-profit that are set to disburse the grants and provide the church with technical support. This will be run by a council of senior evangelical clergy from across Indiana.

“For years, evangelical churches have been known as those Christians whose singular mission is ‘salvation of the soul.’ Increasingly, evangelicals understand the good news concerning Jesus Christ to be much broader than this,” Whitaker said in a news release..

In addition, the churches will host at least 26 energy conservation and solar workshops across the state for an additional 200 churches. The application process is scheduled to begin in May and churches will have 14 weeks to apply for a spot.

Solar panels on Englewood Christian Church, an evangelical Christian church on the eastside of Indianapolis. Photo provided by Creation Cares Partners

Creation Care Partners is particularly interested in serving churches of the Assemblies of God, independent evangelical Baptist, Church of Christ, Churches of God, Church of the Nazarene, Lutheran Missouri Synod, non-denominational evangelical, Southern Baptist and Wesleyan traditions.

“Although the message that Jesus delivered 2,000 years ago certainly emphasized the salvation of the soul, it also spoke to social action on behalf of the poor,” Whitaker said. “We cannot care for the most vulnerable among us without caring for the creation on which they depend.”

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