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Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Hastings, Michigan founded in 1863 (third year of the Civil War when Abraham Lincoln was President) is moving forward to install a 20-kW rooftop solar.

July 22, 2019 Hastings, Michigan: Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Hastings, Michigan plans to install a 20 kW-rooftop solar system on their parish hall. Emmanuel was established in 1863 and is the first parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan to move forward with installing a 20 kW-rooftop solar system. Emmanuel Episcopal Church leadership believes and acts passionately in its mission to protect the environment and human health.

“Stewardship of the Environment is an integral part of our understanding of Christian stewardship at Emmanuel,” shares The Reverend Linnea Stifler. “From the beginning God’s people were given a mandate to honor, nurture, and wisely use the gifts of the Creator. In our small way, by installing solar panels on our facility, we are reducing our dependence on fossil fuel, the source of the greenhouse gas emissions that are responsible for global warming. We see this as part of our Christian witness to the love of God manifest in Creation.”

The first step in the project was to focus on energy efficiency and an energy audit was conducted with Occupant Care, Inc. of Grand Rapids, MI. The church achieved a 30% reduction in utilization of natural gas and electricity in the first quarter of 2019, through LED lighting, smart thermostats, and aggressive energy management. The parish continues to educate and advise its members of The Department of Energy and Health Department information that suggests households can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by changing incandescent light bulbs to LED bulb and by setting thermostats at no less than 74 in the summer and no higher than 68 in the winter. Unplugging computers, monitors, TVs, copiers and printers will reduce the use of electricity. Practicing “Meatless Mondays” will mitigate climate change as livestock production around the world is responsible for 18% of all global greenhouse gases.

Some of the challenges of the project were the age of the structure and the number of additions added to the original church built in 1863 (the third year of the Civil War and when Abraham Lincoln was President). The roofs have been updated over the years and some of the shingled roofs replaced in 2003. A roof analysis and structural engineer confirmed the optimum location for the solar and associated capacity for the solar. Solar Winds was selected to provide the materials and labor for the solar installation, with an anticipated installation date of mid-September 2019.

Emmanuel has become serious about environmental stewardship and mitigating climate change. The church recycles, composts, and provides charging for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles during services.

About: Emmanuel Episcopal Church is a caring Christian community that shares God's grace, Gospel, and love with all people. Established in 1863, Emmanuel is located in downtown Hastings near the courthouse. Worship includes the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Sunday at 10:00 am and Thursday at noon, a Morning Prayer at 9:30 am, and a Centering Prayer at 6:00 pm on Tuesdays. Community groups, such as the Thornapple Garden Club, Kiwanis, Alcoholics Anonymous, 4-H, and SuperHeros meet in the church complex. The church is also a venue for the annual Hastings Jazz Festival and for the Barry County Family Promise. A community breakfast held every Saturday for over 6 years serves an average of 100 meals per week. <http://www.hastingsemmanuel.org>

Helping manage the project is Occupant Care, Inc. www.occupantcare.com