
Faithful Footprints Program

Making a Church More Energy Efficient and Self-sustainable while Decreasing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Why?

The United Church of Canada has set a goal to reduce 80% of its carbon footprint by 2050 by focusing on the faith-based buildings that congregations use across the country. The hope is to have 500 congregations involved by 2025. The goal is not just to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also to help save money for congregations and show moral leadership in communities across Canada.

How?

The first step is to recognize how much energy your building(s) are using and how they are used. Visit: <https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pm/dataCollectionWorksheet> for more information. It is also useful to look at the grounds around your faith-based buildings; can you plant more trees for passive heating and cooling for example?

There is funding available through the Faithful Footprints Program as well as other provincial programs.

Faithful Footprints:

You can access up to \$20,000 in energy efficiency grant money to carry out actions that will reduce your church's carbon emissions. You can access an additional \$10,000 if you are decarbonizing (such as reducing the oil consumption of your oil heating system by introducing an alternative heating system that does not burn oil or gas).

Rebates that will help fund the energy assessment and retrofit of your faith-based building from Take Charge:

- Custom Solutions Program: If your building is owned by a registered non-profit organization (like being part of the United Church of Canada) you may receive a free energy assessment, rebates up to a maximum of \$50,000. This program is focused on commercial buildings but they do include eligible non-profit buildings. Learn more at <https://takechargenl.ca/business/custom-solutions/>
- Isolated system business efficiency program: The Isolated Systems Business Efficiency Program targets Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's (Hydro) commercial customers in isolated systems, providing support and financial incentives for a wide range of energy saving projects. Non-profit organizations such as churches are also eligible for this program. For more information visit: <https://takechargenl.ca/business/isolated-system-business-efficiency-program/>

Next Steps

Look at your building and consider what is costing you the most money, what needs to be replaced in the next 15 years, and what kind of resources you have available within your congregation and outside of it. There are many churches that have gone through this process and you should reach out to them and ask for advice. The Atlantic Support Centre is also available to support your congregation. Whatever project is chosen going forward, make sure that there is a small group of volunteers who are willing monitor the before and after results so that everyone understands the impacts of the project.

Need advice?

Email Ben at ben.grieder@ecologyaction.ca
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