

First Lutheran, Decorah: Solar Installed



First Lutheran installed solar panels in August of 2014 to produce some of their own electricity, and in the early stages they are already reporting an energy savings of 34%! Comparing five winter and spring months, January through May of early 2014 before the solar panels were installed, to the same five months in 2015 after the solar panels were installed, they saved \$1112 and reduced their electricity usage by 9120 kilowatts or 34%.

What a great start! And it doesn't even include the summer months when the sun resource is the greatest.

Their solar project was funded in a 3-prong way: two families donated 1/3 of the total cost and then loaned the church about another third which is to be repaid with the energy savings on an annual basis. The final third was covered by a rebate from their electric utility, Alliant.

First Lutheran continues to look for ways to save energy. They are replacing their most-used fluorescent bulbs with LEDs, considering a more efficient dishwasher to replace an aging one, and discussing ways to improve the cooling of the education/office wing.

Check back later for a report on a full year's energy savings!