

Energy

IMAGINE THAT...The stewardship of every congregation includes evaluating energy uses in the church building. Facilities committees have established a historical baseline of heating, cooling and lighting costs.

Don't forget to invite: Facilities committee, most frequent occupants of your building, including renters or other ministries.

Step 1: Have someone review utility bills from the past two years and present a summary of usage.

Step 2: A wealth of resources are available to help you evaluate your energy efficiency. Here are two Do-it-Yourself Checklists:

- [U.S. Department of Energy Home Energy Audit](#)
- [Interfaith Power and Light Cool Congregations Checklist](#)

An electricity usage monitor is a helpful tool. For around \$50, you can buy a gadget that will tell you how many kilowatt hours your appliances use and which ones are energy hogs. Kill-a-Watt is a common brand.

Available from professionals:

Blower door test: This test checks for air leaks around windows, doors, light sockets and shows where more insulation is needed.

Step 3: Evaluate your congregation's energy usage from zero to five. A zero indicates that energy-saving measures have never been considered previously. A five indicates that your building receives excellent routine maintenance, energy usage is tracked and evaluated and steps to reduce usage have been successful.

Step 4: Assemble estimates for energy upgrades needed. If possible, obtain information on how quickly these investments will pay you back. One advantage of having a professional energy audit done is that the company may be able to advise you on this. Some even offer a minimum savings guarantee.

- Which needs are highest priority?
- Are there people in the congregation willing and able to do the work needed?
- Is renewable energy an option?
- How will you finance these projects? Note that MCCN offers [Net Zero Energy Grants](#) for solar arrays and car charging stations.

Step 5:

- Appoint someone to track energy usage and report on savings.
- Form policies to guide future purchases, such as requiring Energy Star appliances.