

## Local church goes green

BURLINGTON, N.J. -- A Baptist church in South Jersey is making the most of solar energy, and it's saving them a lot of money.

The Tabernacle Baptist Church in Burlington paid the electric company more than \$82,000 for electricity last year. This year their power bill will be about \$54,000. Was it divine intervention? Perhaps in some ways it was.

"The sun is shining, and we are saving energy," said Fred Ham.

Fred Ham chairs the church's trustees and was happy to show off what is driving the savings at their church. They have solar panels on just about every usable inch of the roof.

A few years back, the church decided they wanted to go green and save money, but a massive solar array could cost millions up front. The heavy debt made that a non-starter.

"We could not see ourselves doing that," said Ham.

Then the trustees came across Vince DiTanna of Horizon Solar.

"Our company goes out and finds investors for non profits to provide them with a solar system on their building at no cost for them," explained Vince DiTanna of Horizon Solar.

It was a marriage made in heaven. The investors will make money from various government incentives, and the church will get about 80% of its power for the next 20 years at a guaranteed 11 cents a Kilowatt hour, compared to 17 to 27 cents from the power company.

"The least we expect to save in the course of a year is \$27,600," said Tom.

The plan in part to use the money saved to underwrite the Church's various missions including their soup kitchen.

"It is a tremendous help for the homeless, those who have less," said Deacon Willie Reid. "We are feeding all those who come in."

An old Christian hymn called the Doxology begins with the words "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." For the folks at Tabernacle Baptist Church, sunshine is a blessing that has taken on a new meaning.

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