

In the News

Prestonwood Baptist Church

Prestonwood, SEBTS Go Green, Save Money

Posted on Mar 19, 2008 | by Michael Foust

PLANO, Texas (BP)--For Prestonwood Baptist Church, being good stewards of the earth also means saving some money in the process.

In July 2006 the Plano, Texas, church, pastored by Jack Graham, implemented an energy conservation program that involved, among other things, changing light bulbs and altering water usage. Since then, the church has saved more than \$1.5 million on utility bills, church officials say.

"For us, this is about being good stewards of all that God has given us," said Mike Buster, Prestonwood's executive pastor. "If we're to be good stewards of our resources, we're also to be good stewards of God's resources on earth."

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., implemented a similar plan in the last three years and saves approximately \$225,000 a year, schools officials say.

Among the changes, Southeastern installed low-flow toilets, faucets and shower heads to reduce water consumption, and also did a large-scale change-out of the lights, installing high efficiency fluorescent fixtures. The school replaced old thermostats in many of the dorms with newer ones that have a more energy-efficient range -- meaning that, for instance, the thermostat can be turned no lower than around 67-68 degrees in the summer.

Additionally, Southeastern:

- installed a peak-shaving generator that supplies power to the campus during peak energy usage times. That reduces the strain on the local power grid but also keeps the seminary from having to pay the local electric company for energy that costs significantly more during peak times.

- added better insulation to its buildings.

- does not irrigate its campus and uses mostly drought-resistant plants -- something that it did prior to the recent energy-saving methods.

Meanwhile, since July 2006, Prestonwood Baptist Church has installed approximately 300 compact florescent light bulbs throughout the church as well as 140 motion light sensors in bathrooms, meeting rooms and offices to prevent lights from being left on when not in use.

Prestonwood also:

-- installed 28 Weathermatic irrigation controllers around the church grounds to prevent the overuse of water during irrigation. The controllers automatically determine how much water is needed.

-- installed a well and pump to fill a lake near the church. Previously city water was used.

-- "de-lighted" 22 beverage vending machines and installed timers on the machines to limit the use of the compressors.

-- installed timers on all interior Christmas light displays.

-- holds seminars and classes for members and guests on how to have a more energy-efficient home.

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