York Center Church of the Brethren
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News Release

"York Center Church Sets Goal of Reducing its CO2 Emissions by 80% by 2050"

The York Center Church of the Brethren at 1S071 Luther Avenue in Lombard is declaring its commitment to face the historical challenge of impending global climate change by setting a goal of reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions produced by the church and its activities by 80% by 2050. CO2 is the "greenhouse gas" that is thought to be a leading cause for the changes in global climate.

A majority of scientists are coming to an agreement that we are producing long lasting changes in our global climate, and these changes can have major implications for the economic and social well being of the earth's inhabitants. The nature and extent of the changes will be largely dependent on how we deal with the inevitable change in world-wide energy supply and consumption in the coming decades.

The stated goal is consistent with what the York Center church sees as part of its mission to address social justice issues. It is the church's expectation that setting a quantitative goal will also provide the framework for open discussion with the community on the need for change and how it can be equitably achieved.

To achieve this goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050, the church intents to first develop a baseline inventory of current emissions, define steps that can be taken to reduce the emissions, and then set out a timeline for implementation. Annual updates to the emission estimate will indicate if the goal is being achieved.

A preliminary estimate is that the church building and related activities generates 185,000 pounds of CO2 emissions annually. Of this amount approximately 50% is from the heating unit, 25% from electrical energy use, and 25% from driving for participation in church activities. Reducing these emissions by 80% will be a significant challenge.

Some actions, such as replacing candescent light bulbs with fluorescent bulbs, identifying major building heat losses, and planting more trees on its property to provide shade and absorb CO2, will begin immediately. Deeper cuts in fuel use for heating will require consideration of the installation of a higher efficiency furnace, solar hot water heating, and building renovation to further reduce heat loss and increase passive solar heating.

To achieve long-term reductions in electrical energy consumption, evaluations will be made of use of photovoltaics and windmills. The church will also be dependent on success of plans for reductions in emissions implemented by the utility that supplies electrical energy to the church.

Reduction in CO2 emissions from driving (currently estimated at approximately one pound per mile) will rely on conversion to higher efficiency cars, such as plug-in hybrids, car pooling, and more efficient planning of meetings.

Further information and ongoing status of the implementation plan will be available on the church's web site at yccob.org, or by contacting Loren Habegger at habegger4@comcast.net.

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