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United Illuminating upgrades St. John's Episcopal's energy systems

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New Haven, CT A Victorian building in the East Rock neighborhood of the city has been home to St. John's Episcopal Church since 1895. With a small congregation and extremely tight budget, St. John's was recently able to complete two phases of energy efficiency improvements, made possible with support from AVANGRID's United Illuminating (UI) and Southern Conn. Gas (SCG), Energize Conn. incentives and assistance from CMC Energy Services.

Approximately 80% of project costs were covered through the Small Business Energy Advantage program with financial assistance and additional COVID incentives provided through UI and SCG. Energy efficiency updates are estimated to save St. John's more than \$4,600 on their annual gas and electric bills while providing a more comfortable environment for members.

The building committee at St. John's was made aware of assistance available through UI and SCG by congregation member Michael Uhl. As a member of the congregation with knowledge in the energy field, he reassured the committee about the opportunity for financial assistance and the array of benefits of moving forward with the efficiency projects.

"We would never have been able to do these projects without financial assistance through our utilities; this church doesn't have the money but recognizes the importance of keeping our old building from disrepair," said reverend Charles Hoffman. "Our costs for the improvements were financed by the program and will essentially be paid back over a four-year period through the estimated energy savings we are achieving."

The church replaced its old water heaters with more technically efficient heat pumps. Areas of the church that were previously warmed by space heaters now have heat pumps to provide heating and cooling year round. Other improvements included interior lighting, occupancy sensors, basement insulation and a new furnace and boiler. The project cost \$97,189 with \$77,751 covered by Small Business Energy Advantage incentives. Assistance from CMC Energy Services was also pivotal to solidify and execute the energy savings plan and manage the entire installation.

"We have a whole team dedicated to providing these services to ease the burden for the customer," said Jordan Tuttle, associate program manager CMC Energy Services, Inc. "These programs can really help small businesses, community institutions and homeowners to stretch their dollars while making improvements that provide savings in the long run."

As an old building showing its age, the church wasn't as welcoming as it could have been. But now its sanctuary has central air conditioning which provides more opportunities to hold services and even allowed the church to host summertime weddings and funerals. Lighting upgrades have improved the ability to see inside the entire sanctuary and high filtration filters on the new furnaces provide cleaner air and a safer environment. The improvements have given St. John's Episcopal Church the ability to be much more of a community hub and open its doors for use by outside organizations.

"This project exemplifies the tremendous positive impact small businesses and community organizations can achieve by taking advantage of available assistance through their utilities," said Colleen Morrison, Small Business Program Manager, United Illuminating. "Together with our vendor partners, we can provide guidance and solutions for various existing and new building needs."

Reverend Hoffman was so impressed with the initial improvements, St. John's quickly approved a second project to upgrade remaining HVAC systems, including installation of a new high efficiency gas boiler and furnace. The cost of the second phase was estimated at \$32,000 with 80% covered through the UI/SCG assistance program.

"This is an amazing program - to get this kind of work done and achieve savings is a great benefit to us," said the reverend. He has already shared his experience with members of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, hoping other churches will get in contact to reap the benefits from the UI

and SCG programs.

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