

For Immediate Release

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**ENERGY STAR® Certification at Bridgeport's Cathedral of Praise
Showcases Success of the 'God is Green' Initiative**



From Left: Tracey Criss, minister and business administrator, Cathedral of Praise; Barrington Erskine, deacon, Cathedral of Praise; Dr. Amy Thompson, president and lead engineer, Paguridae, LLC; Michon White-Bernard, pastor, Cathedral of Praise; Sheri Borrelli, clean energy communities program manager, United Illuminating; Linda Darveau, environmental scientist, United States Environmental Protection Agency.

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. (Oct. XX, 2016) – On Sunday, Sept. 18, Cathedral of Praise in Bridgeport, Connecticut was honored for its recent ENERGY STAR® certification. This accomplishment was part of the God is Green program, a joint initiative between the City of Bridgeport, The United States Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA), the Connecticut Green Bank, Paguridae, LLC and United Illuminating (UI), a subsidiary of AVANGRID, Inc., through the Energize Connecticut initiative.

“God is Green” was created to help Bridgeport houses of worship determine specific sustainability solutions and create a plan of action to become more energy efficient. The program was launched June 2015 with an educational event that was held at the Margaret E. Morton Government Center in Bridgeport. Here, a panel including city officials and staff from the EPA and UI provided information to local houses of worship on the importance of energy conservation and sustainability.

Over the next 18 months, Dr. Amy Thompson, president and lead engineer of Paguridae, LLC, accompanied by a student from the University of New Haven, conducted benchmarking and collected information to create energy portfolios and track results.

Since it joined the God is Green program, Cathedral of Praise has made a multitude of improvements on its path to ENERGY STAR certification. In October 2015, all lights in the sanctuary were converted to high-efficiency light emitting diode (LED) bulbs. Additionally, the church upgraded its exterior and parking lighting to not only increase energy-efficiency but also help develop a safer environment. The church uses central heating, air conditioning, and ventilation to heat and cool 100 percent of their building. A portion of the resources required to complete these projects were provided through participation in UI’s Small Business Energy Advantage (SBEA) program.

Compared to a baseline audit from 2013, Church of Praise Cathedral saw a 23 percent electricity reduction of 57,923 kilowatt-hours (kWh) to 44,464 kWh. This reduction was accompanied by a six percent decrease in natural gas usage, which when combined with the kWh savings results in a total estimated annual energy cost decrease of \$735 per year since 2013. Additionally, there was a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions of four metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCDE), which is roughly the amount of exhaust your car makes driving each year. Overall, weather-normalized site energy declined 13 percent. Cathedral of Praise spends about \$28,000 a year less than a typical church with the same building size and operating characteristics. These are funds that can be used for other church services and activities.

“The God is Green initiative has taught us to be conscious of our energy consumption and has allowed us to take control of our energy bills, ultimately saving money that can be allocated toward other necessary upgrades in our church,” said Tracey Criss, minister and business administrator, Cathedral of Praise. “These results are overwhelming and I am extremely proud of our church’s commitment to energy efficiency.”

These reductions combined have afforded the church an ENERGY STAR score higher than 75 (on a 1-100 scale) rendering it eligible for ENERGY STAR certification.

“Receiving ENERGY STAR certification is a true testament to the Cathedral of Praise’s commitment to energy savings and has allowed the sanctuary to emerge as a leading example for the Bridgeport faith community on the

importance of energy efficiency” said Linda Darveau, environmental scientist, United States Environmental Protection Agency. “By taking advantage of this opportunity through the God is Green initiative, the church has now adopted sustainability practices that will allow them to maintain, or even improve, their energy savings in the future”

This certification is just one part of the overarching success of the God is Green program. Since its inception, 47 houses of worship have had projects installed or scheduled to be installed. More than \$450,000 in incentives, and nearly \$1 million in zero percent financing loans, were used to fund these endeavors.

Sixteen of these projects were comprehensive, meaning that more than one energy efficiency measure was installed. Collectively, the houses of worship have saved 1,056,116 kWh₂ or \$137,295. Additionally, a combined reduction of 267 metric tons of CO² has produced the same results as removing approximately 56 cars from the road for a year.

“As evident in the data, the ‘God is Green’ initiative has been instrumental in exposing and rectifying previously unrecognized issues that were a source of spikes in the monthly energy bills at these houses of worship,” said Dr. Amy Thompson, president and lead engineer, Paguridae, LLC. “Over the last 18 months, houses of worship in Bridgeport have reduced their environmental impact and energy consumption while simultaneously lowering overall costs.”

Due to the success in the Bridgeport God is Green effort, there are plans to expand the program over the next year into Greenwich, New Haven and Hartford under a new name, “Houses of Worship Go Green.”

To discover more about Houses of Worship Go Green or any of the other energy-saving programs provided through the Energize Connecticut initiative, residents can visit energizect.com or call 1-877-WISE USE.

About Energize Connecticut

[Energize Connecticut](http://energizect.com) helps you save money and use clean energy. It is an initiative of the Energy Efficiency Fund, the Connecticut Green Bank, the State, and your local electric and gas utilities, with funding from a charge on customer energy bills. Information on energy-saving programs can be found at EnergizeCT.com or by calling 1-877-WISE-USE.

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