

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHURCH BUILDING SYSTEMS**

### **Simple things churches can do to save money on energy during extended shutdowns**

**By Ken Fox**

1. Turn off building lighting that is not needed. Replace bulbs in lights that are needed using energy efficient LED bulbs.
2. Turn off all empty and unused refrigerators. Unplug them and crack the door. Keeping the door cracked will keep them from growing mold and mildew.
3. Turn off power to all kitchen appliances. Many appliances that have digital controls consume a small amount of power, even when they are not being used.
4. Turn off water heaters. You do not need to heat water for an unoccupied building.
5. Turn off and unplug all office equipment that is not being used. Encourage the pastor and staff to work from home.
6. Turn off all exhaust fans in unoccupied restrooms.
7. HVAC systems: We are in spring and the danger of freezing weather should be behind us. If the predicted low temps are above 35 degrees, it will be safe to turn off all the heat to your building. The best way to do this is to turn it off at the thermostat. Simply switch the system to off. This will keep the heating and cooling from operating. If you will need heating or cooling in the sanctuary for Sunday worship, you can turn it on just to make that area comfortable to do worship. Here are a few other things to consider.
8. Turning off systems will save energy but could adversely affect things such as musical instruments or electronics. Check with the manufacturer about needed temperature and humidity requirements. Most electronics are not an issue if they are turned off, but if they are being used temperature or humidity could be an issue.
9. In cooler weather open shades and blinds to let sunlight in, and this will allow the sun to warm the building.
10. In warmer weather close the shades and blinds this will reduce the solar load and keep the building cooler.
11. If you have a large sanctuary that has multiple HVAC systems, consider running only one system for worship. You will be able to cool the space adequately with one system when only a few people are there for videoing a worship service. Remember your HVAC system is designed to cool many people. The biggest cooling load in a sanctuary is not the building space, it is the people. It takes much less cooling for ten people than it does for a full house.
12. If an office area will be used by the pastor or staff, try to operate the HVAC system that serves that space only.
13. Dehumidifiers: If you have a moist area such as a basement that has a dehumidifier continue to run the dehumidifier. The area may get warm with the HVAC system off, but the dehumidifier will continue to function and keep the humidity at set point. Check on that area of the building weekly. Remember high humidity issues can cause mold growth. And the last thing you want in your building is mold.
14. Check on the price of fuel oil and LP gas. Fill up all the tanks when the price is down. Fuel prices are dropping so take advantage of the low price.
15. Check all plumbing fixtures such as toilets, faucets and outside hydrants for leaks. Water leaks can get costly fast.
16. An unoccupied building will not need to be cleaned as frequently. This will be a savings for the church.
17. Building inspections should be conducted weekly. Have someone familiar with the building walk through the building. Pay attention looking for things like water leaks, outside lighting, building security and other issues. Unoccupied buildings that go unchecked can quickly have little things become big and costly problems.