

Cost-Effective Solar Streetlights

As prices for solar energy systems go down, communities and individuals are finding cost-effective ways to add solar to augment their current fossil fuel-based systems. Solar lights are a good example. Many people add small solar lights along their outdoor paths to provide low-cost lighting that is not powered by fossil fuel. One of the members of the Stewardship of Creation Ministry Team used only solar lights for her outdoor Christmas display. Communities are also finding that solar-powered lighting can be cost effective along walking trails and streets. For example, Las Vegas began using solar lighting for some areas in 2016; read about it [here](#).

Here in West Virginia, residents of Charleston's Fort Hill neighborhood petitioned the city to provide a streetlight for Fort Scammon Park, their neighborhood park and the site of a Civil War fort. They wanted lighting because they were concerned by increasing levels of litter and loitering. City managers found that supplying grid power to that area required clearing and trenching 500 linear feet. Since the cost of a grid-powered installation 500 feet from the existing power source was prohibitive, they decided to install a solar-powered streetlight. The park now has a self-contained streetlight system with a solar panel, outdoor light and battery storage, all mounted on a streetlight pole.



One member of the Stewardship of Creation Ministry Team is working with a rural elementary school to raise money for lighting its walking trail. Since solar lights cost less in this application, the school is making plans to light the walking trail using solar power. This will also give school children the opportunity to learn about solar power.

As individuals and communities continue to search for safe and affordable lighting for paths, streets, parking lots and parks and solar installations are becoming more affordable, solar lighting systems can be an attractive, cost-effective solution. For more information, contact Stewardship of Creation Ministry Team member Brenda Wilson (brendaterminiwilson@gmail.com).

Photo: Solar Light in Charleston's Fort Hill