

life

■ THE POWER OF FAITH: Project will pay for itself in six years, board members say

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Warkworth church installs solar panels

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Northumberland Today

WARKWORTH — From its steeple to basement, a church in Warkworth is going green.

Forty-eight solar panels were installed last fall to generate energy and income. St. Paul's United Church board members says.

They have shared their experience of the provincial MicroFIT (Feed In Tariff) program with other churches and as far as they know are the only church to have gone solar in this area, says instigator Barry Stowell.

"I really pushed the church to do this," he said.

Stowell lives nearby and has a 2.8-kilowatt solar system on his own home roof, just a fraction of the size of the 10-kilowatt system on the church roof.

The provincial government's MicroFIT program allows individuals, small businesses and groups the opportunity to enter into a 20-year contract at a guaranteed rate of return for the electricity generated from alternative sources and fed into the electrical grid.

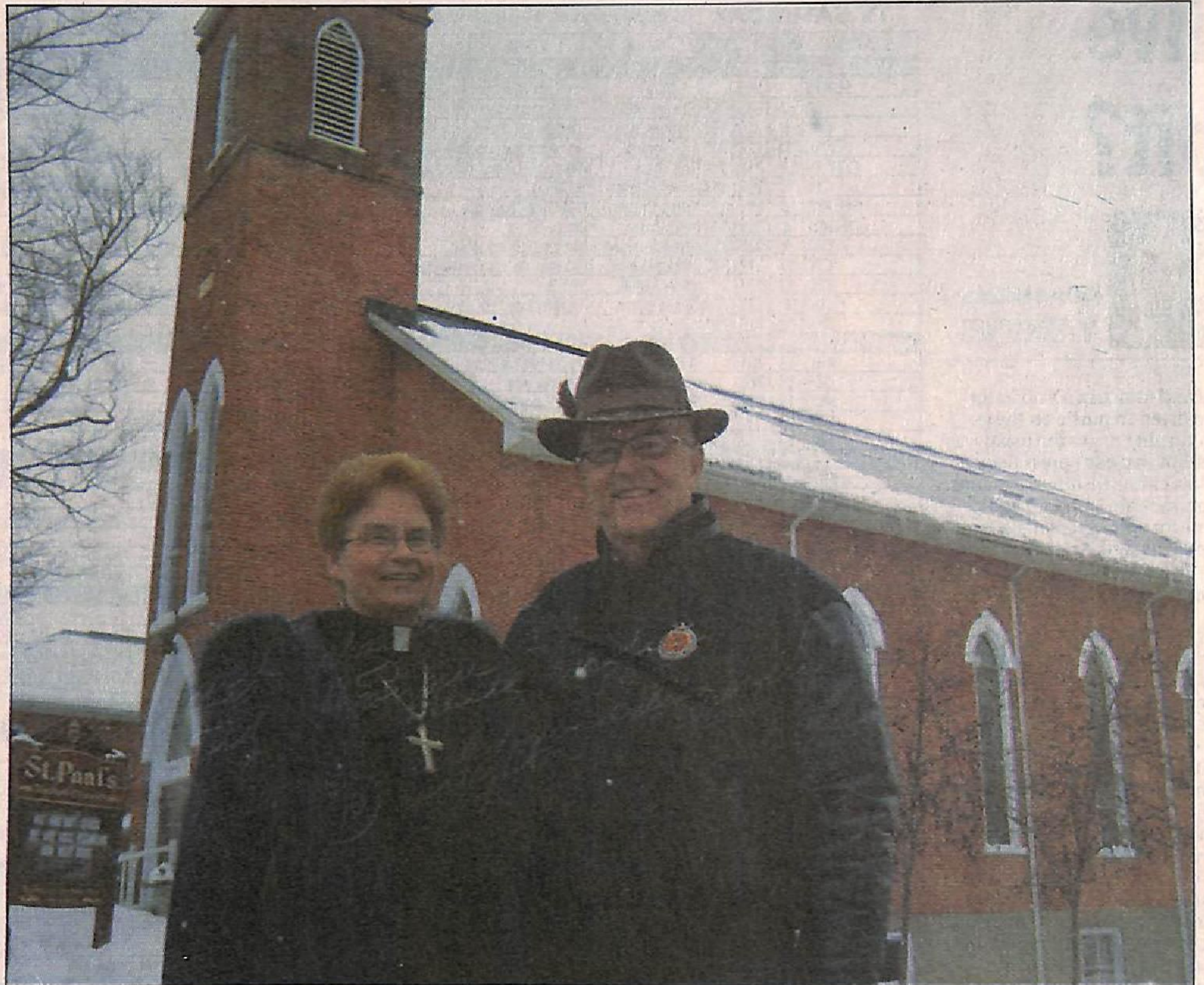
The cost was about \$66,000 to buy and install the panels and was financed by an individual who loaned the money to the church, church board member Dean Peters said.

Board treasurer Ian McCrae said the system will pay for itself within six years and will provide revenue of \$12,000 to \$13,000 annually after that.

Another part of the church's five-year business plan involved greening of another sort: making the facility both more energy efficient and open to the community.

"So we can improve our service to our community," Peters said as the church group was presented this week with a \$38,900 Ontario Trillium Foundation by representative Gladys Petherick and local MPP Lou Rinaldi.

The community hall in the church basement was made more energy efficient with new windows, a hot-water-on-demand system, efficient lights, insulated rear wall and new commercial stove and fridge. The removal of a drafty stage and conversion to a stor-



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Above: The Reverend Doctor Heather Froats and church board president Dean Peters stand in front of St. Paul's United Church in Warkworth, where 48 solar panels have been installed on the roof to generate income for the church's work.

Right: Barry Stowell says about \$12,000 to \$13,000 will be generated yearly through the 10-kilowatt solar panel MicroFIT project at the church. He is seen here with two power inverter panels.

age area is ongoing at this time.

"All in all, we are serving the community more efficiently with greener facilities," Peters stated in a media release.

The church is now in a better position to reach out to the community. It already houses a community food bank and is putting programs in place for youth and single parents. Church members recognize that the 166-year-old facility will only survive if it becomes

more involved, Peters said to those gathered at the church to recognize their achievements.

The Reverend Doctor Heather Froats said people have shared their gifts and that this is God's love in action.

"Taking care of the environment is taking care of creation," she said.

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