

Georgia church adds solar, storage and EV chargers to campus to act as community's resilience hub

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[New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal \(AME\) Church](#) in Lithonia, Georgia, is celebrating becoming one of the first faith communities in the state to install both solar and battery storage on its campus, and is the first commercial pilot participant to pursue battery storage with [Georgia BRIGHT and Capital Good Fund](#).



The move comes as part of a broader effort by the AME Sixth District and [Georgia Interfaith Power & Light](#) (GIPL) to transform congregations into resilience hubs. Equipped with not only solar and battery storage but also electric vehicle charging stations, congregations are able to provide communities with places to power emergency response vehicles, store essential medicines and seek shelter during inclement weather and climate disasters.

“Historically, the AME Church has served as a beacon of hope and a safe haven for communities in times of crisis,” said Bishop Michael Leon Mitchell presiding prelate of the Sixth District AME Church in Georgia. “In becoming Resilience Hubs, our churches are honoring that legacy while preparing for the climate challenges of tomorrow. This is about keeping our sacred call to serve and care for our neighbors alive.”

“The AME church is showing Georgia what’s possible when faith communities embrace both practical resource stewardship and climate justice,” said Hannah Shultz, GIPL’s Program Director. “This installation goes beyond clean energy — it’s about building the infrastructure our

communities need to weather the storms ahead, literally and figuratively.”

Currently, there are 12 congregations enrolled in the program pilot with the Sixth District and GIPL, and additional funding has recently been secured to support implementation at four of those congregations. Together, the Sixth District’s 482 churches have the potential to generate approximately 34 GWh of electricity each year. That’s enough power to supply more than 3,000 households annually.

“This project represents our commitment to being good stewards of Creation and providing for our community in tangible ways,” said Pastor Will Thomas, Lead Pastor of New Bethel AME Church. “When the lights go out in the neighborhood, we want New Bethel to be a place where people know they can come for safety and support. That’s what our church is called to do.”

Installed by [Better Tomorrow Solar](#), the 70.11-kW solar system and 41-kWh battery storage system is expected to generate 80% of the church’s annual energy needs, saving the faith community over \$15,000 annually in utility costs.

The project was made possible with support from the Hive Fund, Black Voters Matter and [Georgia BRIGHT](#), which financed the solar energy procurement agreement (SEPA) with zero up-front cost to the congregation. A program of the national nonprofit [Capital Good Fund](#), Georgia BRIGHT allows nonprofits and homeowners to access solar without upfront costs by leveraging federal tax credits, grants, and bulk purchasing.

“Black Voters Matter is proud to support New Bethel AME Church as it leads the way in building stronger, more resilient communities,” said Melinee Calhoun, State Organizing Manager for Black Voters Matter Fund. “This project is about more than clean energy, it’s about ensuring that Black communities have the resources, infrastructure, and power to withstand crises and thrive in the face of climate challenges. By investing in solutions like solar and battery storage, we’re helping create a future where our communities are not only heard at the ballot box, but also equipped to shape and sustain their own well-being.”

“New Bethel AME Church is demonstrating extraordinary leadership as the first Georgia BRIGHT Communities participant to integrate battery storage with their solar system,” said Alicia Brown, Director of Georgia BRIGHT. “By embracing storage, they’re not only cutting costs and increasing resilience for their congregants and the surrounding community, but also showing how community organizations can play an important role in reducing costs and increasing resilience for the larger energy system.”

To further support the community’s green transition, Better Tomorrow Solar also provided the church with two dual Level II EV chargers, which will also power the community’s electric vehicles with power from the sun.

“Installing solar and battery storage at New Bethel AME is more than an energy project. It’s a powerful statement about the kind of future we’re building together.” said Roji Aldashi, CEO of Better Tomorrow Solar. “It is both inspiring and deeply meaningful to see the Church lead by example in its commitment to environmental stewardship. When houses of worship become sources of power and safety for their communities, that’s when we see the true impact of renewable energy. We at Better Tomorrow Solar are proud and honored to support this important initiative.”

News item from Better Tomorrow Solar