



# St. Stephen's

EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ST. STEPHEN'S LETS THE SUNSHINE IN

**Austin, TX** —“Let the sunshine in” was the literal and metaphorical message as the St. Stephen's Episcopal School community gathered on December 2, 2022, in front of Becker Library to celebrate the addition of solar panel arrays on five strategic locations on campus. A rousing playlist of “sunny” songs, including a live student performance of The Beatles' *Here Comes the Sun*, set the stage for a joyful ceremony. The celebration included student designed t-shirts, campus-wide Science lessons on the impact of solar, a presentation from student environmental group Green Goblins as well as an official blessing of the panels by The Rt. Rev. Kai Ryan, bishop suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and St. Stephen's board chair.

Funded through the generosity of donors, including lead donors Frederick and Ann Dure P '19, and in conjunction with a special incentive rebate program from Austin Energy, the 1,064 panels will generate 787,594 kWh per year. The school estimates it will realize an estimated annual savings of \$65,000. Beyond the practical reduction of St. Stephen's energy costs and carbon footprint, the solar panels are a visible affirmation of the school's and of the Episcopal Church's commitment to the care of creation. Head of School Chris Gunnin shared, “We know how fortunate St. Stephen's is to have 370 beautiful acres, and we take seriously our responsibility to be thoughtful stewards of the Earth. In fact, one of the five core values underlying our school mission is to be ethical citizens and stewards of the planet we share. That's why I am so proud of the school taking this significant step forward to deepen our commitment to sustainability.” Bishop Kai Ryan congratulated St. Stephen's, noting that by adopting practical ways of reducing our climate impact, we live more humbly and gently on Earth.

Spear Solar installed the panels and provided professional development and curriculum support to St. Stephen's science faculty to maximize teaching opportunities. Science Department Chair Frank Mikan reflects on the significance of the panels: “The new solar panel system presents teachers with many and varied teachable moments — from science to social studies, from math to the arts, and even from ethics to economics. Issues related to pollution, climate change, electrical generation, financial solvency, conservation of land and resources, and what the future may yet hold for all of us, can also be addressed. St. Stephen's is not only ensuring its future by reining in energy costs, but also by fostering a cadre of students, who as adults, will be inspired to help create a clean and dynamic future that is as bright as the sun itself!”

# # #



*Head of School Chris Gunnin and Rt. Rev. Kai Ryan with members of the student environmental club Green Goblins.*



*Frederick Dure P'19, Will Dure '19 and Rt. Rev. Kai Ryan "flipping the switch" to commission the solar panels.*

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*A college preparatory school serving grades 6 through 12, St. Stephen's Episcopal School is a diverse coeducational boarding and day school of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. St. Stephen's provides a caring, inclusive community that respects the dignity of the individual — a family-like setting where attention to our students transcends the boundaries of the traditional academic day. For more information, contact the Admission Office at 512-327-1213 x210.*