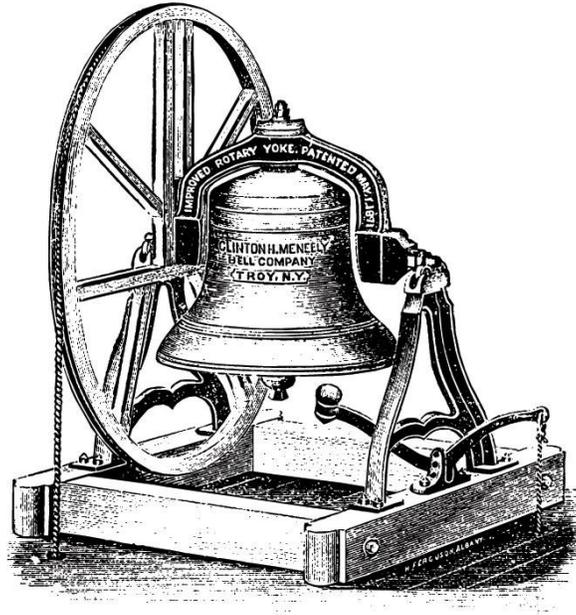


American Reformed Church Bell History and Protocol



History of the Bell

1883: *The bell was made by the Clinton H. Meneely Bell Company, Troy, NY*

Late 1800's until 1986: The bell was rung to call worshippers to church at ARC and to signal the beginning of the worship service. According to Del Kuper, former custodian, prior to ARC taking the bell down, it was rung at 9:00 am. and then again at 9:30 a.m.

October 21, 1985: Consistory discussed what to do with the bell tower since it was repeatedly leaking.

December 8, 1985: The congregation voted at the annual congregation meeting to form a committee to investigate what to do with the bell tower.

December 16, 1985: Consistory appointed the following people to the Bell Tower Committee: Odean De Jong, Ken Evertse, John Kooiker, Dale Van Veldhuizen, G.J. "Sonny" Vander Schaaf, and Denny Wright.

January 20, 1986: Consistory voted that the bell would be rung at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays to then be followed by the prelude.

March 17, 1986: Consistory reviewed a report on the removal of the bell tower work and a bid from B and H Construction and then voted to remove the bell tower as per the bid from B & H Construction (Arlyn Boon and Virg Horstman).

April 1986: It is believed that John Kooiker used his dragline to take the bell down. The steeple was removed and a roof put in place. The bell was stored at the farm of Chuck and Burdette Oelrich.

December, 1986: Congregational Meeting....a discussion was held concerning the building of a free standing bell tower.

January 19, 1987: Consistory decided that new pews were needed instead of a bell tower at this time.

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Sometime while the bell was in storage, Mark Marra was head of the ARC property committee and began looking into ways the bell could be displayed as well as researching ways to have it cleaned. The project got moved to the back burner...probably due to the possible and eventual expansion of the church building. Every once in a while Mark would mention that something should be done with the bell. Sometime after the new addition was built in 2005, Mark & Julie poured a concrete pad west of the 2005 addition for the bell to be displayed on. Mark and Tom Van Leeuwen began cleaning up the bell.

2006: Arlan Moss moved the bell from the Oelrich farm to the church garage, north of the church building.

March 2012: After Mark Marra's passing, Julie and her family donated memorial money to be used in the renovation and displaying of the bell, feeling it would be the best way to do some type of remembrance of Mark, as he had started the process a few years earlier. The consistory asked the deacons to take on this project.

Deacons Ryan Bakker, Dennis Kelderman, Bob Koerselman, Eric Ribbens, Dennis Smit, and Wade Vander Maten decided that not only should the bell be displayed, but that it should also become functional and took on the project.

Galen De Jong and De Jong Hardware helped with getting the bell moved to Vander Kooi Frieight where Dennis Smit and Vern Smit cleaned up and polished the bell.

Bob Koerselman and some of his employees at DEMCO in Boyden designed, constructed, and painted the bell tower. Harlo Vink and Kenny Vink of Doon Welding built a new wheel for the bell. Midwest Paint and Body of Hull painted the frame of the bell. Shaun Kelderman and Mark Den Besten and MJ's Construction enlarged and prepared a concrete base for the tower to set on. Eric Ribbens and Greenworld did some landscaping around the bell tower.

November 9, 2012: Bob Koerselman, Dennis Smit, Eldon Vanden Brink, Todd Woelber, and Howard Smit assembled the bell tower and bell.

November 11, 2012: the bell was rung at the beginning of the church service for the first time since the 1980's.

November 26, 2012: Consistory decided the bell would be rung on Sunday mornings at 9:10 and again following the prelude. Deacons Denny Kelderman and Bob Koerselman and Elders Dennis Wright and Rob Van't Land will be responsible for the ringing of the bell.

December 2, 2012: The dedication of the bell occurred during the morning worship service. A short ceremony was held outside. Pastor Steve said a few words and Mark and Julie Marra's daughters Nikki Blum, Amanda Hulstein, and Kelsy Van Egdome rang the bell. Pastor Steve finished the dedication of the bell ceremony inside during the worship service.

Church Bell Protocol:

In the Roman Catholic Church, bells are typically rung fifteen minutes before the beginning of the worship service and rung fifteen times, although the number of times is not definite. They are also rung at other times during a Catholic service. There are no set rules for Protestant churches.

Bells such as ours are designed to be rung in two different ways and for two different purposes. By pulling an attached rope, the bell moves and is rung by the clapper on the inside to call people to worship or to celebrate. For funerals, the bell itself remains stationary while a second rope, attached to an exterior clapper, is pulled. This gives the bell a more solemn gong tone. Some churches such as First Reformed Church of Hull ring the bell one time for each year the deceased had lived.

Note: If we left out anyone's name who also played a role in the history of the bell, we apologize. We included information given to us by members of the Congregation as well as information taken from Consistory and Congregational Meeting Minutes over the years. American Reformed Church Consistory. November 26, 2012