

# Music To The Ears

## Upgrades made to Warren church bell system

AUG 31, 2020  
BRIAN FERRY

Staff Reporter

[bferry@timesobserver.com](mailto:bferry@timesobserver.com)



Times Observer photo by Brian Ferry A crane rises up Wednesday from Second Avenue alongside the bell tower of First United Methodist Church in Warren.

---

First United Methodist Church's music department has upgraded its repertoire.

Since 1927, the bells in the tower of Warren's First United Methodist Church have been ringing over Warren.

Now, they will be able to ring out more songs than ever.

The church embarked on a renovation project for its carillon — the entire bell system — a few years ago. Replacing the 100-year-old untreated wood framework was one of the main goals. This week, steel framework was hauled from the ground to the tower by a crane from Lloyd Crane and Equipment to waiting employees and contractors for Verdin Bells and Clocks of Cincinnati.

*“The original wooden structure was made of cedar. It was built in 1926 when the church was constructed,”* Director of Music Ruth Nelson said. *“Over the years the wood has begun to deteriorate. We are replacing the wooden frame with a steel bell frame of bolted and welded construction. The steel frame is hot dipped galvanized then primed and painted for superior corrosion protection.”*



Times Observer Photo by Brian Ferry The 11 original bells — cast in 1926 — were removed from the wooden frame that formerly held them in place and a new steel frame was hauled up by the crane.

---

That framework will hold all 11 of the 1926 bells — D-sharp, F, G, G-sharp, A, A-sharp, C, C-sharp, D, D-sharp, and F. Those bells weigh a collective 11,700 pounds — the largest alone is 2,800 pounds.

Joining them on the frame are some new sounds.

*“We are adding three bells: a G bell which weighs 212 pounds and is 20.9 inches in diameter; a G-sharp bell which weighs 181 pounds and is 19.9 inches in diameter; and an A-sharp bell which weighs 139 pounds and is 18 inches in diameter,”* Nelson said. *“They were poured to match current bells so we anticipate that they will blend with existing bells. These bells were given in memory of Jane Carter Betts, Christine Marti, and Brita and Donald Dorn by their families.”*

The new bells increase the options.

*“This will expand the songs that we are able to play on the carillon,”* she said. *“The previous 11 bells allowed us a selection but we were limited in pieces without these additional bells.”*

The bells are played electronically. Upgrades to that system — which can be played live or pre-programmed. That project was completed in 2016.

The crane was expected to be on site Wednesday and Thursday and the work done by Saturday.

A dedication is scheduled for 11 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 27.