

Vestry Policy on Bell Ringing

St Paul's Parish is fortunate to have its own "ring" of eight bells. Ours is one of only three such sets of bells in the entire Midwest, and one of just 31 in all of North America. It is our hope that these bells will be an additional asset to Riverside's many historic features, and that their wonderful sound will be a source of pleasure and enjoyment for all of our Village neighbors.

On occasion, touring groups of accomplished bell ringers from across the country and around the world contact us with requests to ring our bells. While we want to be as accommodating as possible to these groups, we also want to ensure that our parish life and the lives and schedules of our neighbors are respected. To meet this goal, St Paul's Vestry has adopted a ringing policy.

There are actually three type of ringing: liturgical, practice, and peal ringing.

- **Liturgical ringing** is ringing for the parish liturgies, on Sundays, major Holy Days (such as Christmas and Easter), and weddings and funerals. This is the type of ringing with which most of us are very familiar and which virtually everyone finds quite enjoyable.

- **Practice ringing** is the practicing that every ringing group must do. Bells are an instrument just like any other musical instrument, the playing of which requires a good deal of skill, and the ringers must rehearse in the same way all musicians must regularly practice.

Our parish policy states that *there may be no practice ringing before 10 a.m. or after 9 p.m., and no practice may exceed three hours in length.* Any other ringing must be "muffled," i.e. the clappers are wrapped with leather muffles so that the bells produce no audible sound.

- **Peal ringing** is the ringing that produces the magnificent and joyful cascade of bell sound which you have heard if you have visited Westminster Abbey or any of the English cathedrals or have seen such events as a British royal wedding on television.

It is an extremely complex pattern of ringing that has been developed into a very sophisticated science. We have a leaflet available which provides quite a good and interesting explanation.

It is this type of ringing that the visiting groups come to do. What they normally attempt to do is ring a "peal," that is, all the mathematically possible combination of sequences. Peals are challenging and exacting, and the rules state that they must be done flawlessly in order to be counted as successful.

They produce a glorious concert of bell playing, and it is traditional to do them in honor of some person or event, e.g. our nation's independence on July 4th, our astronauts on the occasion of the first moon landing, the anniversary of the Allied victory in Europe in May 1945, etc.

Our parish policy states that *peal ringing may not be done before 10 a.m. or after 9 p.m., and no peal attempt may exceed four hours. All requests for permission to do peal ringing must be made at least one month in advance, and all peal ringing must be in honor of a specific event or person which is in the public interest. There may be no peal ringing during Lent.* When permission is granted for peal ringing, which will be done only after careful evaluation and scheduling at reasonable intervals on appropriate dates, the community will be notified both of the time and the event it commemorates.

If you would like to receive individual notification of special ringing, or perhaps would be interested in participating in the bell program yourself, please call the Parish Office at 447-1604. Our Tower Captain, Allison Olson, will be happy to get in touch with you.

We hope this policy will enhance your enjoyment of our wonderful musical instrument. Please let us know if you have any questions concerning the bell program.