



# Donor Guide



BELLS & CLOCKS  
SINCE 1842

BELLS | BELL RESTORATION | DIGITAL CARILLONS | BELL TOWERS | CLOCKS

“Bells are the voice of the church.”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“The sound of bells takes me back to college, my hometown, and Sunday mornings. They bring me peace and remind me of good times.”

John Oliver, Chicago, IL

“Bells make a daily statement that the church is alive and well in the local community.”

Lawrence Frank, Ft. Wayne, IN

## In Their Own Words

“Bells signal a joyful time, uplifting our spirits as we enter church on Sunday; they provide a source of strength to many at a memorial service for a loved one, or they bring joy to a newly married couple.”

Sheila Hornton, Harrisburg, PA

“When people hear bells ringing, their hearts are lifted in ways that remain with them for life.”

Lawrence Thomas, Cincinnati, OH

# A Guide for Raising Funds for the Music of Bells

Real cast bronze bells or bell restoration, a digital carillon, a bell tower or a tower clock. Whatever your capital project includes, how to raise funds for the project might seem daunting. This brief guide offers ideas that can help you achieve your goal.

## 80% of bells are funded by donors.

Donors can make bells, a digital carillon or a tower a reality. Many of our bells and digital carillons have been funded by single donors, donor families or church groups. Chances are, there are donors in your community who would love to provide bells or a bell tower to commemorate important events, to honor persons still living or in memory of a loved one who has passed away. This guide will help you begin the process of raising money for your special project.

## Step number one: create a plan

- **Establish your goal.** Clearly define what you're raising money for. Create a timetable with a beginning date and an ending deadline for your project to be in place: Christmas, Easter, a major anniversary. Make it long enough to meet the goal, but short enough to keep people involved. Make sure church leadership and office staff know what the goals are and are involved and supportive.
- **Establish a project campaign budget.** Include purchase price, installation, site preparation, sales tax if applicable, campaign cost of 6-8%, and 2-5% for donor recognition gifts or events.
- **Establish a project funding committee** of 5 to 10 individuals with specific responsibilities from the leadership in your church and community. Start with a few people you know you can count on to see the project through then ask them to recommend others. Discuss all aspects of the project with your committee. Set regular committee meetings. Suggest ways to find donors then let the committee create the plan.
- **Establish a list of potential donors** in order of potential size of donation. Have the committee brainstorm ways to raise the needed donations and prioritize these ideas.
- **Decide on a communication plan** for each type of potential donor, from lead donors to nearby friends and neighbors.
- **Establish donor appreciation strategies** such as thank you notes and events, gifts, methods for public recognition in publications, websites or on-site.
- At event end, **follow up with acknowledgements**, finalize budgets and your system for gift collection.
- **Hold an appreciation/dedication event.**

## Sources for donations:

- Church members and the surrounding business community.
- A large extended family group that could cover the entire cost.
- A person who runs a large business or the business itself.
- Apply for grants available for your type of project. For example, if yours is a historic building, there are grants through "Partners for Sacred Places" and The National Trust for Historic Preservation's "The National Fund for Sacred Places".
- Identify a "closer", a person who might be motivated to make that final gift so that the end of the campaign can be announced.

## Ways to engage donors:

- For a congregation, divide the number of church members into the total cost of your project to get the amount needed from each family or member. Assume that one third of your members won't contribute, one third will give what you ask and one third will give more. Your message: *"We know that some of you may find it difficult or even impossible to give that amount, so we ask that you give what you can. Those of you who are financially able and willing to give more, please give to your ability to make the purchase possible."*
- For a large extended family group, each family could sponsor a bell with their inscription of choice cast into their bell.
- In the case of a digital carillon, divide the total cost into 12 equal months. Ask 12 donors to come forward to underwrite one month each. Alternatively, a digital carillon could be divided by eight swinging liturgical bells paid for by eight donors or donor groups.
- Create a matching gift program. Often a large contribution, if designated as a matching gift, can spur on other contributions. The donor will only give money if matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis. A good way to handle the individual donor whose large donation will not cover the entire purchase price.
- Local restaurants could donate a percentage of the proceeds from one night's business.
- The names of donors giving a certain dollar amount or more could be inscribed on a bronze plaque. Smaller donations could be acknowledged on donor bricks.

- Hold an auction/silent auction. Put your committee to work on this event. Make sure to use a professional auctioneer - someone who can really work the crowd and make it an enjoyable event. Have no reserves on prices and get rid of everything. Sell dinner, soft drinks and coffee and make money on that, too.
- Establish a memorial fund. Most churches have a memorial fund. See if bells, bell restoration, a digital carillon or future bell maintenance can be included and suggested to possible donors.
- Sell a donated big-ticket item. One church has financed a number of projects from a member's car donation. The member donates his car every few years, which the church then sells. The member does better financially by getting the tax write-off than he would if he traded in his car.
- If using Verdin's lease-to-own program, ask individuals to adopt one payment, one payment each year of the loan or several payments.
- Create a perpetual funding program for bells, bell restoration or a digital carillon. Allow individuals to sponsor a special song on a day of their choice to honor the living, memorialize those who have passed or note a special anniversary or birthday.

## How they did it:

### Bell Restoration - Community Involvement

Holy Cross - Immaculata Church is located in a popular combination residential/commercial neighborhood in Cincinnati, OH. The church successfully raised funds to repair and restore their cast bronze bells in three months time:

- The parish selected chair people to work on the campaign. A committee was formed and a deadline of Easter was established.
- Possible donors were identified within the church and the community and silent fundraising began.
- The committee made phone calls and conducted face-to-face meetings.
- Media publicity, brochures, fliers and a fundraising event with a local restaurant helped bring in the needed funds beyond the congregation.
- The bells rang at Easter!



## How to spread the word:

- Top potential donors who have been identified by committee members should be contacted in person by people on the committee who know them. Make sure the committee members have answers to potential questions such as: How much will it cost? Why do we need this? When will the bells be installed?
- Announce the campaign during a church service. This helps create excitement, enthusiasm, pride and determination. Have the pastor or another respected church leader announce the goal, mentioning the benefits of adding bell sounds to the church and sharing their own commitment to the program.
- Mention the project each week in the church bulletin as a reminder of the goal and how much it will cost.
- Committee members should make phone calls to a list of people, asking for their support. Again, they should be equipped to answer questions.
- Send out emails to all church members or potential donors asking for their support.
- Place a mention on your website. Ideally with the ability for donors to make an on-line payment.
- Mention your funding campaign on social media encouraging people to share the post to help spread the word.

## How they did it:

### New Carillon of Bells - One Donor Family

When the new Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral was being built in Raleigh, NC there were no funds for real cast bronze bells, a fact that “haunted” one parishioner. After much prayer and a meeting with the Bishop, she and her husband decided to provide the gift of a 50-bell cast bronze carillon to the cathedral.

Bishop Burbidge’s philosophy: “We are not only spirit, we are body and spirit, and our body has senses. The bells call to those senses. They call our minds to be attentive to the sacred.” The donor added: “These bells will chime, and it will be a constant reminder that with us always is the presence of the Holy Spirit and the healing presence of God.”



## Tracking progress:

- Use the graphic of a giant thermometer to show the movement toward your goal.
- Use a fundraising chart that can be filled in as donations are made.
- Make mention in social media to report progress and when you are getting close to your goal. Challenge someone to come forward and make the final donation.



## How they did it:

### New Digital Carillon - Multiple Donors

The 21 year old digital carillon at St Andrew the Apostle Church in Drexel Hill, PA needed replacing. The church selected a new Schulmerich carillon to replace the older unit. While

several families expressed interest in this unique memorial opportunity, no one was in a position to underwrite the entire cost. The church chose to break down the cost of the carillon into ten equal parts. At the 10% donor level, four donors came forward the first week of the digital carillon campaign.

The church stressed how bells touch our hearts and positioned the carillon campaign a “Unique Memorial Opportunity” which was featured on their website. A successful campaign answered by ten donors!

The sound of bells truly touches hearts and resonates throughout the community. Cast bronze bells, a digital carillon or a bell tower bring the community together. Donors who understand this will want to be a part of your fundraising campaign. They are just waiting for you to ask.





## About The Verdin Company

Family owned since 1842, The Verdin Company is the premier supplier of bells, carillons, clocks and towers with more than 55,000 landmark installations worldwide. In a field that requires highly specialized skills, the Verdin family passes their knowledge to the next generation and the artisans who work for them. The sixth generation leads the company with old-world craftsmanship, modern technology and innovation.



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