



### Spotlight on Crestwood The Carillon

Finally, I thought, I have found something at Crestwood that hasn't changed over the years. I was wrong, of course. The change happened. It was for the better, and many of us haven't noticed.

The carillon is back!

When my family lived across the street from the church years ago, we often paused and sat on the front steps at noon as the lovely Crestwood bells gently pealed and sent a musical message across the neighborhood. Knowing nothing about the subject, we debated if they were real bells (which they sounded like) or if they were a recording (which they were.) They sounded regularly at noon and at six.

Now that I've moved back, I no longer live near the church and had forgotten about the carillon. Then Rick Tittman and I went exploring, and he showed me the small box behind the chancel that is the new carillon. There is no question the box is important as it is locked behind a little gate that indicates its significance.

The old Carillon gave up the ghost some years ago. Apparently, there wasn't a general outcry as most people didn't hear it regularly anyway. But the carillon actually did add a great value to Crestwood in a number of ways.

The Bellefonte air remained silent until about a year ago when Ward Ransdell was unexpectedly contacted by the original company in a marketing outreach. He followed through on it, and the result was that Crestwood purchased a new improved carillon that once again proclaims our presence and mission in the community.

Seeing with my own eyes that our carillon was not real bells, I reached the limit of my musical knowledge. I once again turned to our patient musical expert, Jane Johnson. So much I have learned from her!

Jane explained that we have a new Schulmerich Digital Carillon which can do all sorts of things. It is able to play anything from "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "Amazing Grace" (which it has) to "Dixie" and "Star Wars" (which it never has). It can play traditional Christian hymns, Catholic hymns, Contemporary hymns. It played Ukrainian hymns at the beginning of the war. It can play up to 7,800 different tunes.

At the approach of each liturgical season, Jane programs the amazing box with appropriate songs for the season. She chooses a variety of hymns, remembering that not all in the neighborhood are of our faith tradition.

And with each song, she can choose what type of bells or combination bells, the piece can play. I hesitate to go into detail for fear of making a mistake, even though she kindly sent me articles about carillon bells. Suffice it to say, there are English bells with a rich, deep, tone which are best played singly although they can be combined with other bells. There are also Flemish bells, Harp bells, and True bells. Each type has its own strength. They are often combined together and there are 1, 3, 5, 8 possible bell peals. Jane can preview every song with the different types of bells and combinations. It really is amazing.

The bells can be set for different church activities. They can chime during a wedding and even could have played "Jesus Loves the Animals" during the blessing of the animals recently, had that been desired.

There is much more to explain about digital carillons, but the more I say, the more I risk getting things wrong musically. But if you want to hear these lovely sounds, drop by the

church any day at noon or 6 pm or Sunday morning at 10:30 as they call the congregation to worship. What a lovely sound.

Our minister Kory has this to say about our new carillon: "The carillon is such an important part of our presence in the neighborhood. I hope that those around us experience a bit of joy or sing along when they hear a favorite hymn in the air. It was a sad time when our carillon wasn't working, so I'm thrilled the bells are ringing again."

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If there is some area of the church you would like to know more about, please share your ideas with me. Let's explore together.

Gaye Holman: [gdholman@bellsouth.net](mailto:gdholman@bellsouth.net).



Crestwood Christian Church | 1882 Bellefonte Dr., Lexington, KY 40503

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