

# The Bells Are Ringing



Church bells ring for all sorts of reasons: Call to worship; special celebrations; or alarms to alert citizens of impending storms or attacks. Church bells have been rung both to commemorate a marital union as well as to ward off devilish attacks. The first record of a church bell used in such fashion took place in AD 400 (some 1620 years ago) and it has grown in popularity ever since.

Suffice it to say that residents of any small town with a church possessing a bell tower have become accustomed to hearing the regular chime of its tones. So whenever a small town's bells become silent, people take notice.

When the First Congregational Church in Mount Dora (which is the oldest structure in our downtown area, having been built

in 1883) discovered its bell tower was in such a state of disrepair that it required the discontinuation of its ringing, the church leaders immediately put out a call to action. Setting up a GoFundMe site, it requested the help of the community it served to try to raise the funds needed to repair the bell tower.

Our small town community responded in spades. Aided by a matching grant from our local Community Trust, we were able to quickly raise the funds needed to effect the repairs and get our bell ringing again.

There are small stories and there are big stories. But small stories can often make a big impact. The chiming of a neighborhood church bell is no small matter. We sometimes don't realize how important it is until we no longer hear it. Because it can and does serve as a unifying force. It reminds us that we are all part of the same community. This may sound corny but it is a message we would all do well to heed. We need to keep the bells ringing... not only in Mount Dora... but also in our own hearts.



*Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio specialize in the preservation of family memories through the digitalization of films, videotapes, audio recordings, photos, negatives and slides. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit our [website](#).*