

✝ HOLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HILL OVERLOOKING ROBESONIA ✝

THE CARILLON – A Joyful Noise Machine

In early times, church bells were used as a call to worship, as a timekeeping device before personal watches or clocks existed, and even to warn villagers about emergencies. They marked joyous occasions and tolled during times of mourning. In many communities, the church tower was also the town's tallest structure, making it the perfect location for bells that could be heard for miles.

Bell towers typically had one bell attached to a wheel; it was rung by hand by pulling ropes attached to the wheel, causing a clapper to strike the sides of the bell. As advancements were made, craftsmen began tuning bells to specific musical pitches, allowing them to play melodies using multiple bells rather than simple peals.

The word **carillon** comes from the Old French word *quarregnon*, meaning "a set of four bells." While churches have used bells since around the 5th century, the true carillon developed much later, in the Low Countries (what is modern-day Belgium, the Netherlands, and northern France) during the 16th century.

A true traditional carillon consists of:

- At least 23 chromatically tuned bronze bells;
- A keyboard (called a *clavier*) with wooden batons played by the fists and pedals played by the feet of the *carillonneur*;
- Mechanical connections from the keyboard directly to the clappers inside each bell; the bells themselves are fixed in place.

A shift to electronic carillons occurred due to the huge cost of purchasing, installing, and maintaining heavy, large bronze bells, as well as the generally limited musical expressions. The electronic carillon does not require the same type of structural space or an individual to manually play it. With speakers installed outside, it takes up little space in a closet, can be automated to play on a defined schedule using an extensive library of digital recordings or synthesized bell sounds, and has volume control (an important consideration for neighbors, even in a more rural setting!).

St. Daniel's first added a bell tower to its building during the 1911 renovations to the church. The bell itself had a weight of 1800 pounds. The bell tower had to be rebuilt in 1964

after it deteriorated to the point of being hazardous. The bell was temporarily removed and then reinstalled.

Before those renovations, by a special vote of the Church Council in June 1963, Schulmerich Carillon, Inc. was permitted to install a set of carillon bells in the bell tower of the old church. As it was a demonstration of the product, this was at no cost whatsoever to St. Daniel's for one month and with no obligation to purchase them, though surely that was the company's desire. In December 1963, the carillon bells were donated by Martin and Annie Wolfskill.

The December 1976 fire destroyed the church building, including both the bell tower and the carillon system. (The remnants of the church bell hang in the Memorial Garden on the old church grounds.) The new church had a steeple instead of a bell tower. In 1978, for the dedication of the new church building, a Schulmerich electronic carillon was again gifted to St. Daniel's, in memory of Martin by Annie Wolfskill, and Mark & Nancy Wolfskill along with their children Teresa, Mark, Douglas, and David. Additionally, gifts toward the carillon bell tape were made to the glory of God by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Shartle and family, and by Paul A. Kimmel.

When the carillon was installed, the original speakers were housed in the steeple. We lost the ability to amplify when the steeple had to be removed in 2023. In July 2026, the system was restored with newly installed wiring and speakers. The new speakers were installed on the side of the building.

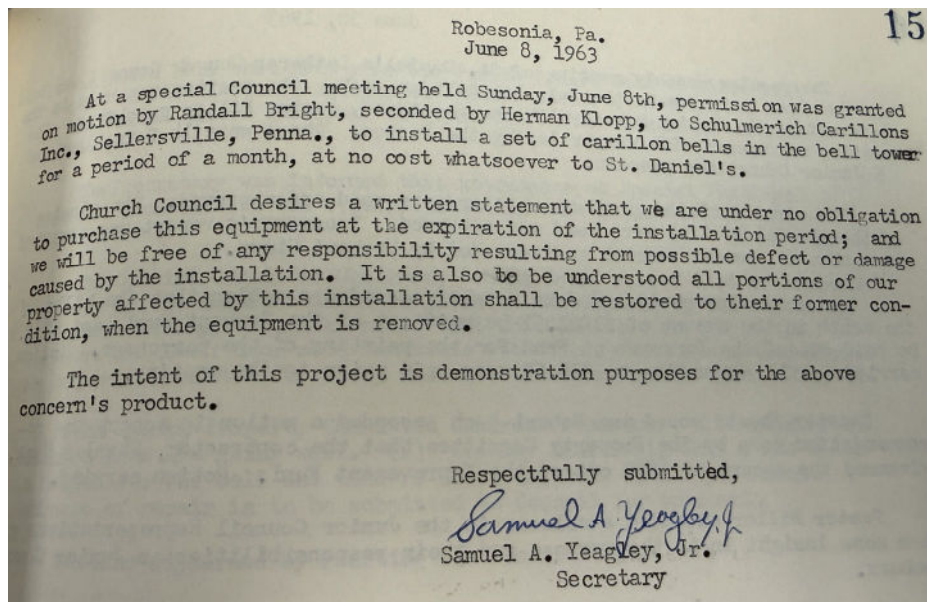
We are so thankful for the families whose generous gifts made St. Daniel's carillon systems possible, and we are so thankful to those who recently gave their time, effort, and resources to restore the carillon to working order! For centuries, church bells have called the faithful to worship, marked moments of joy and sorrow, and carried the voice of the church beyond its walls. From its days as "The Eck Kirche / Corner Church" and from its place "On the hill overlooking Robesonia," St. Daniel's carillon once again continues that tradition, ringing out with hymns and peals of bells into the surrounding community!

What an amazing and enduring history we share!

Follow this space throughout the year for snippets of St. Daniel's history from 1751 to 2026.

Historical details taken from the 'St. Daniel's Evangelical Lutheran Church "Eck Kirche" 1751-2001' church history book written by the St. Daniel's History Committee in celebration of the 250th anniversary. More details from Church Council meeting minutes and Parish Records from the applicable years. Church bell and carillon history researched on the internet. Photos of the Schulmerich carillon system by Kim Henning.

**#StDaniels #StDanielsLutheranChurch #EckKirche #CornerChurch
#OnTheHillOverlookingRobesonia #RobesoniaPA #1751StDaniels2026
#275thAnniversary #HolyHighlights #History #OurHistory #ChurchBell #Carillon
#SchulmerichCarillon #CallToWorship #ALotHappensIn275Years**



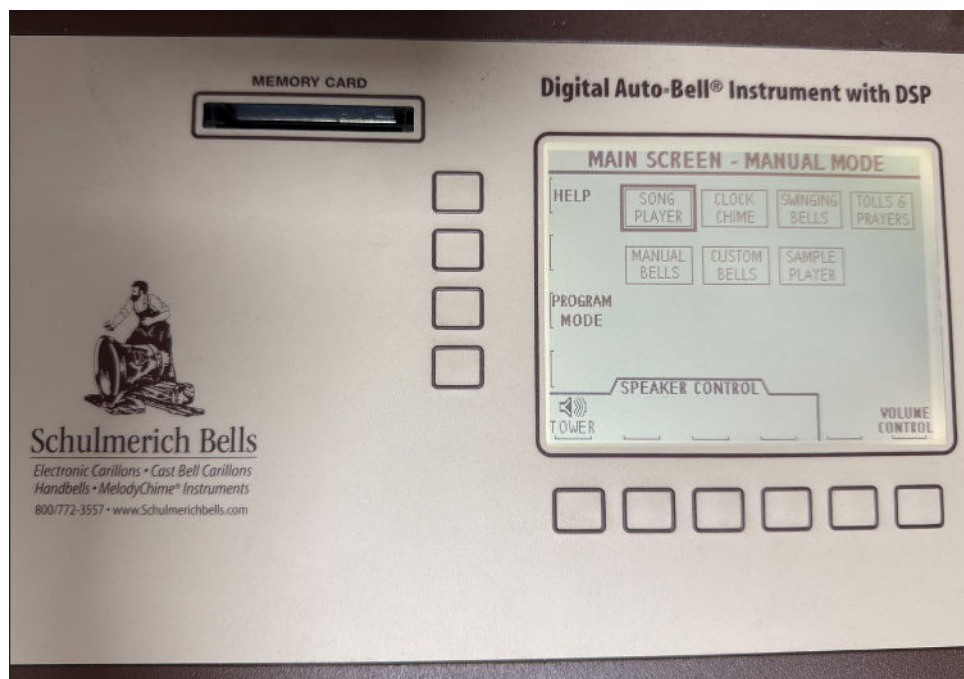
June 8, 1963 Church Council meeting minutes noting the trial installation of the Schulmerich carillon.



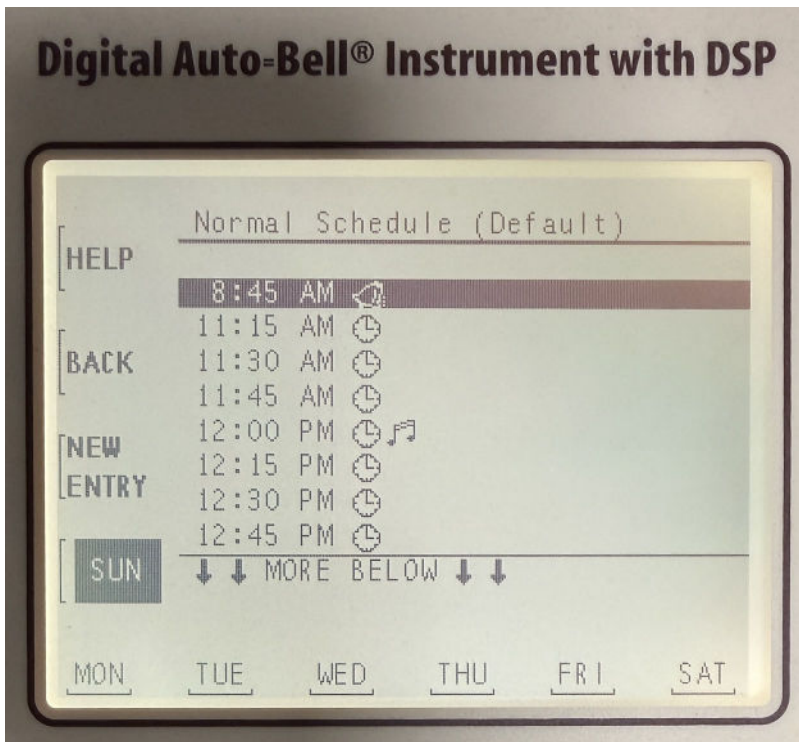
The Schulmerich company still exists as a handbell and melody chime manufacturer. The Schulmerich Carillons brand has since been acquired by the Verdin company.



The console for the Schulmerich carillon! It resides in a closet.
The round spinner on top of the console (brown with white dot) acts like a computer mouse.



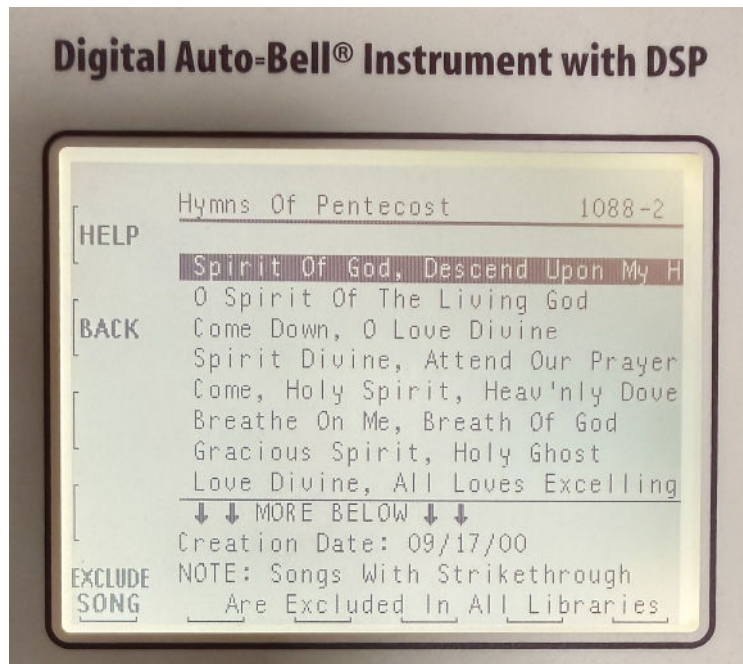
The console for the Schulmerich carillon! It's a bit antiquated but still works!



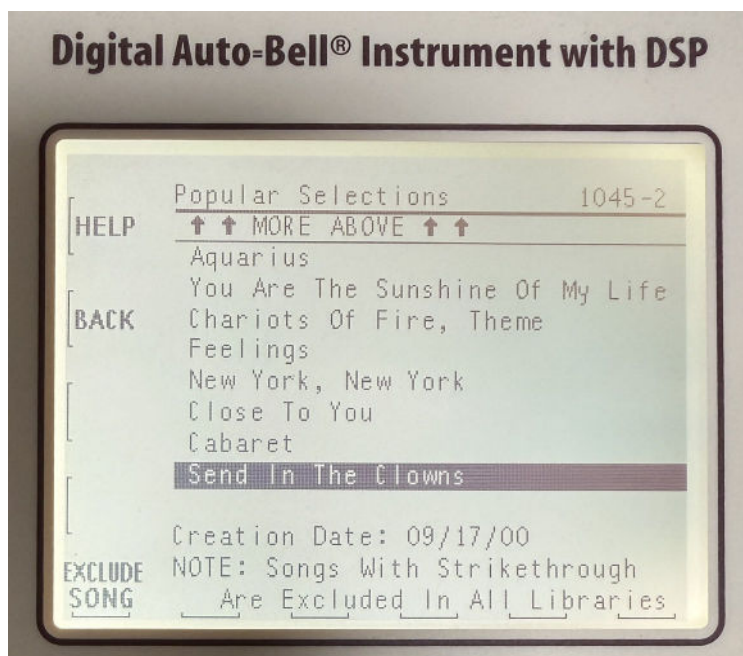
Display of the schedule for Sundays. (No bells during the church service.)



This is our library of music! Due to the age of the system, it is somewhat limited.



There are libraries of sacred music for specific church seasons.
This is a partial list for Pentecost, the current church season.



There are also libraries of other music categories, including “Popular.”
“Popular” is a relative term!