

Memorial Lutheran Church ready to 'ring-in' new technology today

Modern technology is helping enhance a church tradition nearly as old as Christianity itself.

This week Memorial Lutheran Church installed a new digital carillon system — an electronic bell ringing machine.

"The system plays the authentic sound of real cast bronze bells and replaces an obsolete bell system," Dave Graesser, choir director at Memorial Lutheran said. "The new digital carillon system has hymns and peals saved on flash memory, which will not wear out over time," he said.

Those well beyond shouting distance of the church will hear the bells ringing from the outside bell tower as well as inside the sanctuary.

"Bells are used to ring at various programmed times and can also be rung manually as needed," "The system is able to ring bell tolls, one bell ring, bell peals, two to eight separate ringing bells, hymn melodies and manual play from the organ console," he said.

The outside bell tower, with four new speakers, will ring as clock chimes hourly during the day and rings hymn melodies from an expansive 200 hymn library three times a day. It also rings a bell peal to announce the start of Sunday worship services.

The inside bells will ring a four-bell peal as a Call to Worship to open Sunday services. In addition, a four octave keyboard has been attached to the organ to manually play hymns and descants at services.

According to the Catholic

Encyclopedia, bells have been used as part of Christian church gatherings since 585 A.D., although some scholars say the practice may have been in place in the early 300s A.D.

The new system at Memorial Lutheran was made by Schulmerich Carillon, a company founded in 1935. Schulmerich has installed carillon systems locally at Minute Maid Park and the University of Houston. Memorial Lutheran Church also has a Schulmerich handbell collection.

The new carillon was made available through various i, di-

vidual congregation donors and several dedicated memorial accounts. Without the gracious support from these sources, this endeavor would have not been possible.

Memorial Lutheran Church, located at 5810 Third Street in downtown Katy, will incorporate the dedication of the new carillon into the Reformation services on Sunday, October 30 at 8 am and 10:30 am. The pastors at Memorial Lutheran Church are the Rev. Martin Teske and the Rev. Erik Stadler.



A new way to play

Sandra Petersen, organist at Memorial Lutheran Church, will bathe members of the congregation with music from the church's new digital carillon. The system replaces traditional brass bells found within the church and its bell tower. (Times photo/Ken Steger)

October 30, 2005