

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church has new church bells blessed at special mass and dedication



Bishop Jeffrey Grob of Elmwood Park is in the process of blessing at the dedication and blessing of the church bells and clock tower on Aug. 11, 2024 at (OLPH) Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Glenview (1775 Grove St.). (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)



By **KARIE ANGELL LUC** | Chicago Tribune

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It was 70 degrees and sunny for a blue sky dedication and blessing of the clock tower and new church bells on Aug. 11 at (OLPH) Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Glenview.

Following mass, the bishop blessed the church bells and renowned clock tower in an outside dedication with prayer, incense, and Holy water.



Bishop Jeffrey Grob of Elmwood Park uses incense at the dedication and blessing of the church bells and clock tower on Aug. 11, 2024 at (OLPH) Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Glenview (1775 Grove St.). (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

“What a blessing to see the community gather together and to be a part of a blessing that is the source of helping to bring people together,” Grob said.

“As we heard in the ritual itself, bells have a long time been the means of calling people to prayer.

“Wherever you are, even if you can’t immediately leave what you’re doing,” Grob said, “... you can be where you are and be reminded of God’s presence, of being able to stop for a moment and simply offering a prayer so it’s this excitement and this joy that fills this moment.”

Rev. Jeremiah Boland, OLPH pastor, said, “There’s something about the sound of the bells in a neighborhood that make it really a community.

“Parishioners and non-parishioners that live in the environs of the church, you’re always concerned when you introduce a new urban sound, how it’s going to go over, and people have genuinely been very thrilled,” Boland said. “It’s so exciting.”



From left, during the special mass processional are Bishop Jeffrey Grob of Elmwood Park, Rev. Jeremiah Boland, OLPH pastor, Rev. Larry Basbas, OLPH associate pastor, and Rev. James Barrett, resident, at the dedication and blessing of the church bells and clock tower on Aug. 11, 2024 at (OLPH) Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Glenview (1775 Grove St.). (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

The new bells are not physical church bells. The new electronic system replaces an older model and music is played back for listeners in the church vicinity. The new bell processor system was bought from an American manufacturer.

“It’s like night and day,” Boland said of the new system which the generosity of donors made possible.

“The technology is phenomenal,” Boland said. “The old system was the size of a refrigerator, the new one is the size of a toaster and it’s got 3,100 hymns that it’s capable of playing.

“It has bluetooth technology so God forbid, in an emergency, the police have access to the speaker system so if they had to make an announcement,” Boland said.

“It’s just amazing its capabilities.”



Ahead on the church steps, the dedication begins with the sounding of the herald trumpet by Philip Feo of Lake Zurich at the dedication and blessing of the church bells and clock tower on Aug. 11, 2024 at (OLPH) Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Glenview (1775 Grove St.). (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

Boland said the new bell system adapts to the church's numerous occasions.

"We have a lot of funerals here, for instance, you have people that have served World War II, Vietnam, and you can't always get a military honor guard and the bells can play "Taps," sounds like the bugler is standing right next to me," Boland said. "That's so comforting to a family of a veteran if they couldn't have a military honor guard.

"It's been a great addition."

On the church front steps, Philip Feo of Lake Zurich played a gleaming silver herald trumpet to start the outside dedication program.

"It's always an honor to play here," Feo said.

After the dedication along the church steps, people could enjoy complimentary refreshments served in the adjacent Hellerman Garden where a white statue of the Virgin Mary is featured. Many were seen on benches sitting quietly to linger to listen to a concert of the new bell system's musical selections.

"Bells certainly bring us great joy," OLPH Sister Paulanne Held of Glenview said, who added having the bells ring, "is just a reminder of the joy of the church in our community."



From left, Bonnie Grob of Elmwood Park, Bishop Jeffrey Grob's mother, greets Sister Paulanne Held of Glenview before the special mass and before the dedication and blessing of the church bells and clock tower on Aug. 11, 2024, at (OLPH) Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Glenview (1775 Grove St.). (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

Longtime OLPH parishioner Martha Burke said about the bells, "I think they help everybody."

Bonnie Grob of Elmwood Park, Bishop Grob's mother, attended the special occasion and watched her son in action during a special day at OLPH.

About her son, "I'm proud of him every day," Bonnie Grob said.

"It's absolutely beautiful," the bishop's mother said about the new Glenview bells. "Every part of the church should be blessed, every little nook and cranny."

Parishioner Jennifer Farber of Glenview noted the new bells allow listeners to realize, "they're always in the presence of God when they're outside walking in Glenview or doing gardening.



From left, Ruth Gamber, a six-decade resident of Glenview, and Jennifer Farber of Glenview say hello to Bishop Jeffrey Grob of Elmwood Park before mass and the dedication and blessing of the church bells and clock tower on Aug. 11, 2024, at (OLPH) Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Glenview (1775 Grove St.). (Karie Angell Luc/Pioneer Press)

“That’s how I feel when I hear the church bells.”

To the people who gave donations of varying denominations to fund the new bell system, “Thank you, thank you for making this possible at our church,” Farber said. “It beautifies our church.

“It makes it special.”

Visit <https://olphglenview.org>.

Karie Angell Luc is a freelancer for Pioneer Press.

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