

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## HISTORIC BELLS HEAD TO OHIO FOR RESTORATION

**Renewal of prized carillon a huge project for Toronto's "downtown church for a diverse city"**

(Toronto) September 12, 2018 – Located 100 steps up a spiral staircase at Queen and Church Streets sits *"a musical treasure and one of the most renowned instruments in the world."* With its distinctive peal, Metropolitan United Church's carillon (a set of 23 or more bells played from a keyboard), welcomes an array of visitors to the city core. Dating to 1922, it's one of Canada's largest, able to play pieces from Pachelbel's Canon to Bohemian Rhapsody to the [national anthem](#) (most recently upon the Raptors' championship win). But with age comes wear and tear - in a massive operation beginning Sept. 18, 2019, the majority of its bells will head southward to Georgetown, Ohio for restoration, returning spring 2020.

The foundry of Meeks, Watson & Company, specialist in carillon design and custom bell profiles, will oversee repair work, from the descent of bells ranging 22 to 150lb. in weight through several floors of the tower, over the border, and throughout all aspects of restoration.

The bells' refurbishment will include the following:

- **Transmission system:** New moving parts - bolts, cables and transmission bars that connect the bell-ringer to the bell clappers. Including 275 replacement wires ([Image A](#))
- A new **carillon keyboard** ([Image B](#))
- Restoring sound production: **new cast-iron ball clappers**, including for the oldest/largest bells remaining on-site (over time, the clappers lose spherical shape, so harmonics become less clear) ([Image C](#))
- **Re-tuning**

Metropolitan's tower and carillon have a place in history, having survived the devastating 1928 fire that destroyed the main part of the church, credited to the fire-proof door between the attic of the sanctuary and the tower. Now, almost 100 years later, decades of exposure of the rare concert-size carillon to Toronto's climate make the repair mission pivotal. Part of the church's **Our Third Century** campaign, the total costs for the restoration are estimated at approximately \$400,000.

Media opportunities are available to visit Metropolitan's tower, particularly as bells move towards ground level on Wed. Sept. 18 and Thurs. Sept. 19, 2019. Closed toe shoes and signing of a safety waiver are required.

Pictures of the Metropolitan carillon [here](#).

### **About the Metropolitan Carillon**

North America's first harmonically tuned carillon is used as a teaching venue, and welcomes recitalists from around the world. 54 bells total. Heaviest weight: 8,456lb.

[Hear](#) our carillonneur, Roy Lee.

- 1922. 23 bells cast by *Gillet & Johnson*, Croydon, England. Donated by Chester D. Massey
- 1960. 12 mid-range bells cast by *Petit & Fritsen*, Netherlands. Donated through the estate of Dr. Charles and Mrs. Lola Rosevear Drury
- 1971. 19 treble bells cast by *Paccard et Fils*, France. Donated by the Massey Foundation.

### **About Metropolitan United Church**

Metropolitan United Church is in the heart of Toronto, welcoming a diverse congregation drawn from across the city. A 200-year history is complemented by a progressive vision of the future. Home to the largest pipe organ in Canada, the church maintains an esteemed music program, and is recognized for a breadth of outreach initiatives serving the downtown community.

### **About the Third Century Campaign**

Blessed with a sacred space that welcomes worshippers and visitors from all parts of the GTA and beyond, Metropolitan's congregation has launched a three-year capital campaign, looking to the refurbishment of the carillon, sanctuary and McGill Square Park. This follows the modernization of the building's north-end.