

1895: The Church Bell

"In 1893 the church celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Immediately afterward the people began working together, with Mrs. Delzell as their leader, to earn money for a church tower and bell.

The Village Temperance Hall provided a place for their social functions and it was here, on Valentine's Day [February 14], 1893, that a basket social was held to start the fund. Many other events followed – a phonograph concert, young people's concerts, an old folks concert, literary society debates, bazaars and more basket socials. For over two years the people worked - and then, when the tower was nearing completion, enthusiasm ran high. Mr. Samuel Foster Paul, from New York City, still remembering the Church in Genesee, offered to give the bell in memory of his mother, Harriet Foster Paul.

At last the dream was realized! We were to have a church bell! It arrived by freight, on June 14, 1895; and was brought to the church on June 15. It stood on the porch over Sunday, June 16. On Thursday, June 20, it was placed in the tower and that same evening pealed forth, calling the villagers to their weekly prayer meeting.

On Sunday, June 23, 1895 it was dedicated. The text that day was from Psalm 98:4 – 'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all the earth, make a loud noise and rejoice and sing praise.'"

*For 118 years this bell, our Church Bell, has called God's people together. The bell weighs 814 pounds and has a Bb tone. For the 95th Anniversary celebration, Mr. Harry Torhorst composed "The Old Church Bell." *"This beautiful song was later published and is now sung in nearly every Genesee home."**

[The original is by Miss Letitia Mason.]

EDITOR'S NOTE: In 1925, during remodeling and the turning of the church clockwise by 90 degrees, a new entrance and bell tower were erected. The bell was taken down during reconstruction and then reinstalled in the new bell tower, the one we still see today.