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**LABOR DAY WEEKEND BELL-RINGING FESTIVAL  
ENLIVENS LOWER MANHATTAN**

*North American Guild of Change Ringers Gather at Trinity Church for the  
First Time to Hold Their 38<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting*

**September 1–7, 2009**

*August 28, 2009, New York, NY*— This Labor Day weekend, as New Yorkers make their annual escape to the beach to celebrate the end of summer, 100 bell ringers from across the United States, Canada, and England will make their way to Lower Manhattan, where historic Trinity Church will host the 38th Annual General Meeting and ringing festival of the North American Guild of Change Ringers.

The festival, from September 1–7, will enable scores of change ringers to test their skills in Trinity’s belfry—the only tower in the U.S., and one of only two in North America, with 12 change-ringing bells. Because Trinity’s tower has the most bells in the U.S., it can accommodate the most complex change ringing in the country. Twelve bells can be rung in 479 million different permutations, or “changes.” The bells in Trinity’s tower are also a challenge to ring because they weigh from 515 pounds to 2,677 pounds.

The seven-day ringing festival will feature:

- more than 90 hours of ringing the bells in Trinity’s tower, including ringing that will be publicly audible in the churchyard, and at Broadway and Wall Street, on
  - Friday, September 4, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.;
  - Saturday, September 5, from 12 noon to 2:00 p.m.;
  - and Sunday, September 6, both before and after Trinity’s 11:15 service, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.;
- a change-ringing “marathon” in “the tower that never sleeps” to last 24 hours from 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 6, to 2 p.m. on Monday, September 7;
- a series of peals (extents of ringing that involve 5,000 changes, and last about 3 hours) and quarter peals (1,250 changes for about 45 minutes);
- a special public Evensong service in Trinity Church at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 5, preceded by a public quarter peal on the tower bells at 4:00 p.m.;
- two ringing courses designed to help ringers from all over North America become more comfortable ringing on 12 bells; and

- change ringing on handbells, which is easier physically than ringing on tower bells, but twice as hard mentally, because each ringer rings two bells at once.

In addition to the festival, the Guild will hold its Annual General Meeting in New York City for the first time, on September 5. At this business meeting, Guild officers will make various reports, including a report about two new change-ringing towers that are coming on line this year in Louisiana and Massachusetts.

Lyn Barnett, the President of the North American Guild of Change Ringers, said, “The Guild is excited and honored to be able to hold its annual meeting at Trinity Church in Lower Manhattan—a place rich in history and tradition. We also look forward to ringing in Trinity’s tower, which is an outstanding venue for change ringing.”

The bell ringers at Trinity, known as the Trinity Ringers, have been planning the festival for more than a year. Greg Russell, who is the band’s Ringing Master and Steeplekeeper, said, “The Trinity Ringers are delighted to welcome our change-ringing friends in the North American Guild to New York and to Trinity’s twelve-bell tower. We have planned a ringing festival that will give everyone an excellent chance to up their ringing game. It’s like so much else about New York: If you can ring it here, you can ring it anywhere.”

### **The North American Guild of Change Ringers**

The **North American Guild of Change Ringers** is a voluntary organization of change ringers and friends of change ringing in North America. Since its founding in 1972, the Guild has grown from 11 towers and 141 members to 46 active towers and 562 members resident in North America. About 500 non-resident members support the Guild from around the globe, and two new change-ringing towers—in Shreveport, Louisiana, and Orleans, Massachusetts—are coming on line this year. The Guild generally seeks to advance and improve change ringing in the United States and Canada and to promote the appreciation of change ringing among the public. Anyone who supports these goals can become a Guild member. To find out more about the North American Guild of Change Ringers, visit its website at [www.nagcr.org](http://www.nagcr.org).

### **The Trinity Ringers**

The **Trinity Ringers** are the band of ringers who ring the 12 bells in the tower of Trinity Church at Broadway and Wall Street. These bells, a gift in 2006 from British philanthropist Martin Faulkes, are the only set of 12 change-ringing bells in the United States. The Trinity Ringers ring the bells for Sunday-morning services, for weddings, and for civic events such as the inauguration of President Barack Obama and the New York Giants’ ticker-tape parade celebrating their 2008 Super Bowl win. The Trinity Ringers also hold weekly practices, at which new ringers, and visiting ringers from around the world, are always welcome. For more about the Trinity Ringers, visit their website at [www.trinityringers.org](http://www.trinityringers.org).