

The Forms of Bell Ringing and Their Names

The manner of church bell ringing is divided into two basic forms: 1. the measured ringing of the bell to announce church services, and 2. ringing of all the bells.

Ringling to Announce Church Services

By the "announcement of church services" is meant the measured strokes of one large bell. By this sound, the faithful are called together to the temple of God for divine services. In Russian it is known as the "Good news bell" because it announces the blessed, good news of the beginning of divine services.

The "good news peal" is accomplished thus. First there are produced three widely spaced, slow, prolonged strokes, so as to sustain the sound of the bell, followed by measured strokes. If the bell is very heavy or of great dimensions, the measured strokes are

produced by the swinging of the clapper from side to side of the bell. If the bell is of medium size, then its clapper is drawn sufficiently close to the rim by a rope. The rope is attached to a wooden foot pedal, and with pressure from the bell-ringer's feet, the sound is produced.

The "good news peal" is subdivided in turn into two types:

- The usual or hourly peal, produced with the largest bell.
- The lenten or occasional peal, produced on the next largest bell on weekdays of the Great Fast.

If the church has several large bells, as is usually the case in cathedrals or large monasteries, then the size of the bells corresponds to their significance:

- the holiday bell,
- the Sunday bell,

- the polyeleos bell,
- the daily bell, and
- the fifth, or small bell. Usually in parishes there are no more than two or three large bells.

The ringing of all the bells is subdivided as follows:

- Trezvon (Peal) - thrice-sounded, multiple bell ringing. This is the simultaneous ringing of all the bells, then a brief pause, a second ringing of all the bells, again a brief pause, and a third ringing of all the bells, that is to say, a simultaneous ringing of all the bells three times, or a ringing in three refrains.
- Dvuzvon - twice rung. This is the simultaneous ringing of all the bells twice, in two refrains.
- Perezvon (Chain Ringing) - this is the ringing of each bell in turn, with either one or several strokes of each bell,

beginning with the largest to the very smallest, and then repeating several times.

- Perebor (Toll) - This is the slow, single peal of each bell in turn, beginning with the smallest to the largest, and after the stroke on the largest bell all the bells are immediately struck together; then this is repeated several times.

The Use of the Bells and its Meaning ~ Bells for All Night Vigil

- Before the beginning of the All Night Vigil - the "good news peal," which concludes with the simultaneous ringing of all the bells, or the trezvon.
- At the beginning of the reading of the Six Psalms comes the twice-rung, simultaneous peal, the dvuzvon. The dvuzvon announces the beginning of the second part of the All Night Vigil - Matins. It expresses the joy of the

Resurrection of Christ, the incarnation of the Second person of the Holy Trinity, our Lord, Jesus Christ. The beginning of Matins, as we know, recalls the Birth of Christ, and begins with the doxology of the angels in their revelation to the shepherds of Bethlehem, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men. In popular usage, the twice-rung bell at the All Night Vigil is called the second-bell (the second bell peal after the beginning of the All-Night Vigil).

- At the time of the singing of the polyeleos, before the reading of the Gospel, the trezvon, the thrice performed, simultaneous ringing of all the bells, is rung, expressing joy in celebrating the event. At the Sunday All Night Vigil, this ringing expresses the joy and festivity of the Resurrection of Christ. In some localities it is performed at the time of

the chanting, "In that we have beheld the Resurrection of Christ..." Customarily in guide books, this peal is called the "bells before the Gospel." In popular usage, the trezvon in the All Night Vigil (the bells before the Gospel) is called the "third ringing."

- At the beginning of the Song of the Most-holy Theotokos, "My soul doth magnify the Lord..." occurs a short good news peal, composed of nine strokes of the large bell (customary in Kiev and in all of Little Russia).
- On Great Feasts, at the conclusion of the Vigil, the trezvon occurs.
- At Pontifical services, after every All Night Vigil, the trezvon is rung, accompanying the bishop as he leaves the church.

The bells for the Liturgy

Before the beginning of the reading of the Third Hour, the good news peal for the Liturgy

is rung, and at the end of the Sixth Hour, before the beginning of the Liturgy, the trezvon.

If two Liturgies are served (an early one and a later one), then the good news peal for the early Liturgy is simpler and slower than the one for the later Liturgy, and it is customarily done not using the large bell.

At Pontifical divine services, the good news peal for the Liturgy begins at the indicated time. As the bishop approaches the church, the trezvon is rung. When the bishop enters the church, the trezvon ceases and the good news peal resumes and continues throughout the vesting of the bishop. At the end of the Sixth Hour, the trezvon is rung again. Then, during the Liturgy, the good news peal is rung at the beginning of the Eucharistic Canon, the most important part of the Liturgy, to announce the time of the sanctification and the transformation of the Holy Gifts.

According to T.K. Nikolsky, in the book *Ustav Bogosluzhenia*, it is said that the good news peal before "It is Meet" begins with the words, "It is meet and right to worship the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" and continues until the chanting of "It is truly meet to bless Thee, the Theotokos." It is also the instruction in the *Book Novaia Skrizhal* by Archbishop Benjamin (published in S.P.B., 1908, p. 213.).

In practice, the good news peal for "It is meet..." is shorter, composed of twelve strokes. In southern Russia the good news peal for "It is meet..." is performed customarily before the beginning of the Eucharistic Canon, at the time of the chanting of the Creed (12 strokes, 1 stroke for each clause of the Creed). The good news peal before "It is meet..." according to the custom of Russian churches was introduced during the time of Patriarch Joachim of Moscow (1690 A.D.), similar to the custom of the

West, where they ring during the words "Take, eat..."

At the conclusion of the Liturgy on all Great Feasts the trezvon is rung. Also, after every Liturgy served by a bishop the trezvon is rung to accompany the bishop as he leaves the church.

On the feast of the Nativity, the trezvon is rung all the day of the feast, from Liturgy until Vespers. Also, on the feast of the Resurrection of Christ Pascha.

The good news peal before Bright Matins begins before the All-night Vigil and continues until the Procession of the Cross, and the festive trezvon is rung from the beginning of the Procession of the Cross to its end and even longer.

Before the Paschal Liturgy, the good news peal and the trezvon are rung. During the Paschal Liturgy itself, at the time of the

Gospel reading, the perezvon is rung, with seven strokes on each bell (the number seven expresses the fullness of the glory of God). This festive ringing of bells signals the homily on the Gospel of Christ in all languages. Upon completion of the reading of the Gospel, the perezvon concludes with the joyful, victorious trezvon.

During all of Bright Week, the trezvon occurs every day, from the end of the Liturgy until Vespers. On all Sundays from Pascha until Ascension, after the Liturgy the trezvon is rung.

On the feast day of a church, at the conclusion of the Liturgy before the beginning of the Moleben, the short good news peal and the trezvon are rung, and at the conclusion of the Moleben, the trezvon.

Whenever there is a procession around the church, the trezvon is rung.

Before the Royal Hours, the good news peal is usually rung on the large bell, and before the Great Holy Week Hours, the Lenten good news peal is rung on the small bell. As at the Royal Hours, so also at the Great Holy Week Hours before each Hour the bell is rung. Before the Third Hour the bell is struck three times, before the Sixth Hour, six times and before the Ninth Hour, nine times. Before the Typica and Great Compline, twelve times. If during the fast a feast day is celebrated, then for the Hours they do not strike separately for each Hour.

On Matins of Good Friday, when the Twelve Gospel Readings of the Lord's Passion are read, besides the usual good news peal and trezvon at the beginning of matins, there is a good news peal before each Gospel reading: before the first Gospel reading - one stroke on the large bell, before the second gospel reading - two strokes, before the third Gospel reading - three strokes, and so forth.

Upon conclusion of Matins, as the faithful carry the "Holy Thursday fire" to their homes, the trezvon is rung.

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