

FRAMINGHAM

Church bells to sound 350 times for climate change awareness rally

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First Parish Framingham Unitarian Universalist church on Vernon Street will ring its bells 350 times on Saturday at 4 p.m. as part of a call for action on climate change. (Matt Rocheleau for The Boston Globe)

By Matt Rocheleau, Globe Correspondent

At 4 p.m. the bells atop First Parish Framingham Unitarian Universalist church typically chime four times to signify the time of day, but at 4 p.m. on Saturday the bells will ring their usual four times and keep on ringing some 346 times more.

The 350 tolls of the church's bells are meant to signify the parts per million that some scientists, climate experts, and government officials believe is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

"We are currently at 385, and need to take action globally to build awareness to reduce this number to below 350," said a press release about the event.

As one of more than 3,000 rallies in more than 150 nations on October 24, the [International Day of Climate Action](#), leaders at the Vernon Street church hope to "raise the alarm on the excessive amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere," the release said.

"People will certainly be able to hear it ... Hopefully people won't get too alarmed," said the church's intern minister Michelle LaGrave, adding that the town fire department has been notified. "I hope it will be a call to attention in a positive way."

Each bell toll takes around five seconds, said LaGrave, which means the sounds of church bells will be in the air for around 1,750 seconds or 29 minutes.

Because the church plans to ring the bells in intervals of 50, and pause momentarily in between, LaGrave expects the event will last around one hour.

Meanwhile, outside the church, members of the congregation's youth group

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Meanwhile, outside the church, members of the congregation's youth group and Green Sanctuary Committee will hold signs and hand out informational flyers for curious passersby. Additionally, they will give out over 100 energy-efficient, compact fluorescent light bulbs that they've been collecting recently via donations.

Saturday's rally is part of a worldwide effort organized by 350.org, a grassroots global campaign against climate change, urging world leaders to take fast and effective action to combat global warming.

The event will be held two days after the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press released [poll results](#) which say 57 percent of Americans think there is solid evidence the world is getting warmer, down 20 points in three years. And the share of people who believe pollution caused by humans is causing temperatures to rise has also taken a dip, according to poll results.

LaGrave said church members first heard about getting involved in the project while attending an inter-religious summit on climate change a year ago.

"As Unitarian Universalists, we covenant to affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. This is our seventh principle," said LaGrave.

"Ringling our church bells 350 times is a symbolic call for environmental justice. We welcome participation by people of all faith traditions. Please join us," she added.

Other Massachusetts communities participating in 350.org events on Saturday include: Acton, Arlington, Ayer, Bedford, Belmont, Beverly, Bolton, Boston, Boxborough, Cambridge, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, Norton, Reading, Somerville, Stow, Sudbury, Westford, and Winchester.

Many communities will unite at the Old North Bridge in Minute Man National Historical Park off Liberty Street in Concord for a Regional Energy Revolution Rally from 2 to 3:30 p.m., according to a press release about the event.

The Concord gathering will include speeches from area religious and political leaders and will conclude with a group photo in front of Concord's Minuteman Statue, an image that will then appear on the big display screen in New York's Times Square, the release said.

Photos from the Concord event will be available at <http://gwnet.org/October.24.htm>. Photos from events happening all over the world will be available at <http://350.org/media>. For more information on the 350 campaign, visit www.350.org. For more on the 350 campaign locally, visit www.mass350.org.

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