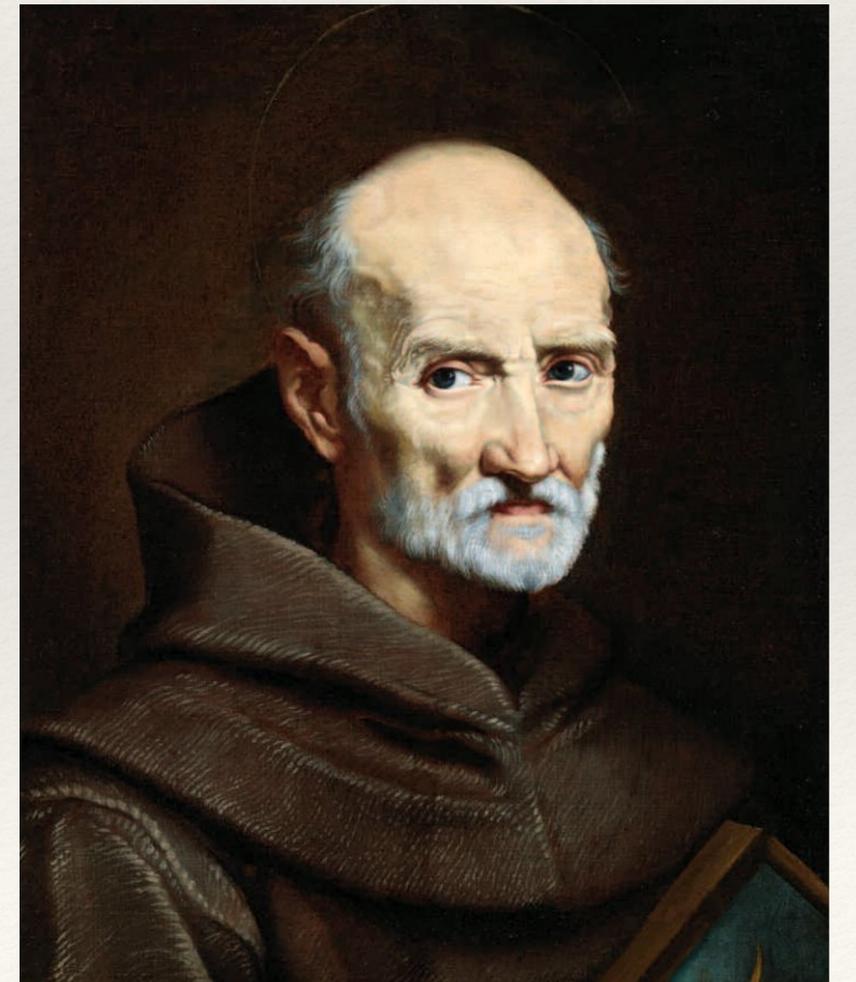


Christmas Carols

On Christmas Night

- This “Sussex Carol” is a popular carol in Britain.
- Its words were first published by Luke Wadding, a 17th-century Irish bishop. It is not known if he wrote it.
- It focuses on what occurred on Christmas night.
- Angels bring good news, news of great joy.
- Out of darkness comes light.
- Glory to God, His peace to men, and good will.



I Heard the Bells

- This song came at the end of tragedy that struck Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
- In 1861, two years before writing this poem, his life was shaken when his wife was fatally burned in a fire.
- Her dress caught on fire, and he tried to extinguish the flames as best he could with first a rug, then his body.
- She died the next morning, and his facial burns were so severe he couldn't even attend her funeral.

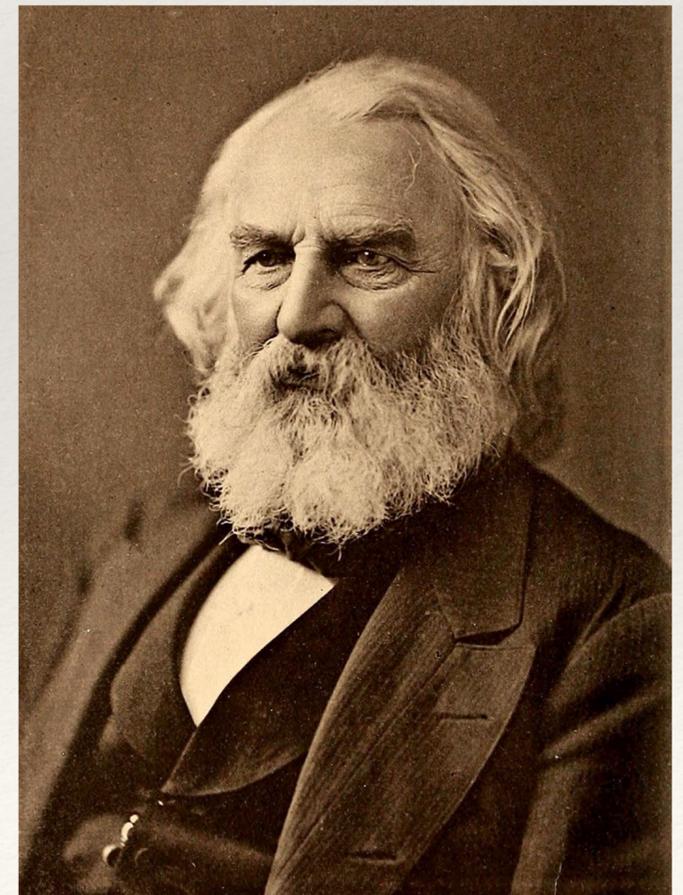
I Heard the Bells

- He grew a beard to cover his burns, and often feared he would be committed to an asylum due to his grief.
- His oldest son Charles joined the Union Army without his father's blessing.
- After the Battle of Chancellorsville, he fell ill with typhoid fever and was sent home to recover.
- He missed fighting at the Battle of Gettysburg (1863) but was able to rejoin his unit.



I Heard the Bells

- Longfellow received a telegram that his son had been severely wounded at the Battle of New Hope Church, Virginia. He was nearly paralyzed.
- Longfellow, a widowed father of six children, the oldest nearly paralyzed, reflected not only on his grief but a country fighting a war against itself.
- He wrote a poem to capture the dissonance in his own heart and the world around him, as he heard the Christmas bells.
- There is hope even in the midst of bleak despair.



Good King Wenceslas

- This is a Christmas carol that tells the story of a Bohemian king going on a journey and braving harsh winter weather to give alms to the poor.
- During the journey, his page is about to give up in the struggle against the cold weather, but is enabled by following the king's footsteps in the snow.
- The story is based on the life of Saint Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia.
- He was considered a martyr and a saint immediately after his death in the 10th century and four biographies were written about him. He was revered as an image of a "righteous king" during the Middle Ages.

There's a Song in the Air

- In the summer of 1904, Karl P. Harrington was assembling the new Methodist hymnal.
- He was trying to include music that could be song by huge church choirs and tiny congregations.
- To relax, he would read poetry by Josiah Holland
- He came across this Christmas poem and decided to set it to music.



Traditional Spirituals

- Spirituals is a genre of songs originating in the United States and created by African Americans.
- They were originally an oral tradition that imparted Christian values while also describing the hardships of slavery.
- Traditional spirituals were originally unaccompanied monophonic songs, but today they are often performed in harmonized choral arrangements.
- Three songs: (1) Mary Had a Baby, (2) Children Go When I Send Thee, and (3) Go Tell It On the Mountain