

**“JOLLY OLD SAINT NICHOLAS”  
DECEMBER 2009**

It's that time of year. Christmas music is all around us. It is played on the radio, in stores, schools, and churches. This music falls into two general categories: secular Christmas songs and religious Christmas carols. I find it interesting to note the religious roots of some of our popular secular songs. One of the favorite non-religious tunes is Wilf Carter's "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas." I guarantee that we'll hear this catchy song played many times in the weeks leading up to Christmas Day.

What many people forget is that Saint Nicholas was a real person. He was a well-loved bishop who lived in the fourth century. Nicholas was admired for giving away his wealth to the poor. December 6<sup>th</sup>, the date of his death, began to be celebrated as St. Nicholas Day. In keeping with the bishop's kind and generous spirit, gifts were exchanged on that day.

The Dutch brought the tradition of St. Nicholas Day to America. They called him "Sinterklaas." English-speaking children pronounced this as "Santy Claus." Christmas traditions in our new country thus began to include a Santa Claus who brought presents on Christmas Eve.

Today when people merrily sing "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas," they rarely think of the kindly Christian bishop who stands behind it. Help us to celebrate the genuine message of Christmas that is lifted in the carols. Our annual Christmas Eve Carol Sing will be held in the sanctuary on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. This special service will close with a candlelight communion. See you there and have Merry Christmas.

Pastor Robert Wierenga  
Lake Seminole Presbyterian Church  
[www.lakeseminolepc.org](http://www.lakeseminolepc.org)