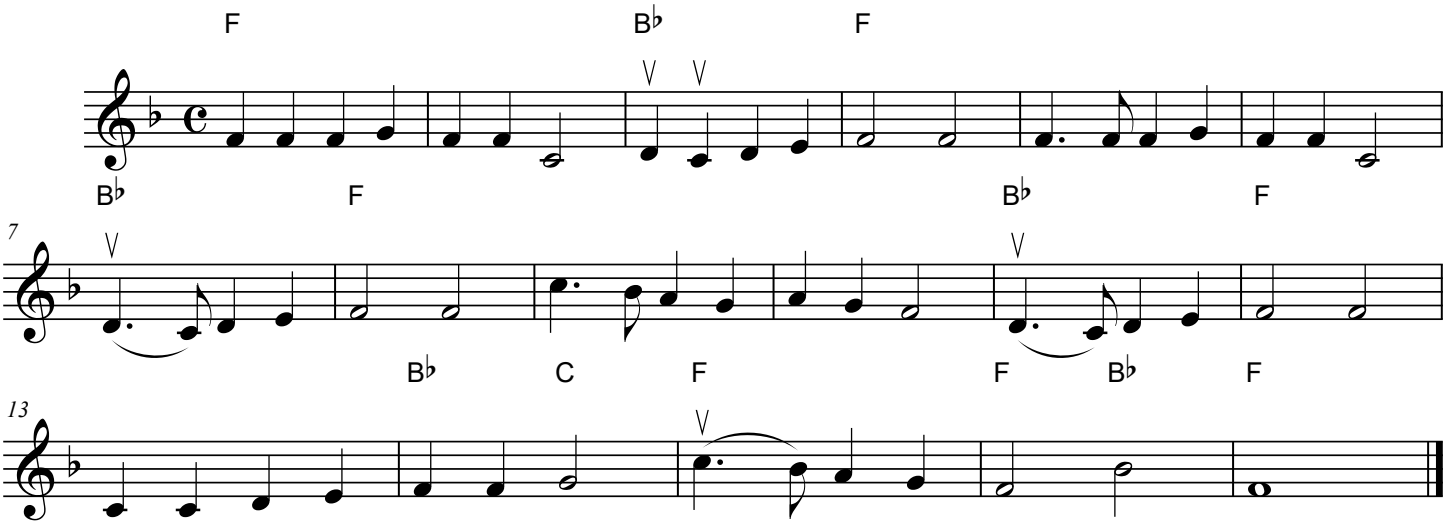
Good King Wenceslas



Good King Wenceslaus was originally a 13th century song from Finland sung in the spring; the current carol was written in England in 1853 by John Neale and Thomas Helmore and changed to a winter carol. The lyrics tell a tale of Bohemian Saint Wenceslaus aiding the poor during a harsh winter on the Feast of Stephen (December 26th).

1 Good King Wenceslas looked out on the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even.
Brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight, gath'ring winter fuel.

2 "Hither, page, and stand by me, if you know it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence, by Saint Agnes' fountain."

3 "Bring me food and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hither,
You and I will see him dine, when we bear them thither."
Page and monarch, forth they went, forth they went together,
Through the cold wind's wild lament and the bitter weather.

4 "Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger,
Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, my good page, tread now in them boldly,
You shall find the winter's rage freeze your blood less coldly."

5 In his master's steps he trod, where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure, while God's gifts possessing,
You who now will bless the poor shall yourselves find blessing.
Timeless Truths

Information from https://www.oldest.org/religion/christmas-songs/
and www.hymnary.org