

100 Years ago

•

January 1917 – WWI: President of the United States [Woodrow Wilson](#) calls for "peace without victory" in Germany.

February 1917– United States ambassador to the United Kingdom, [Walter Hines Page](#), is shown the intercepted [Zimmermann Telegram](#), in which Germany offers to give the American Southwest back to Mexico if Mexico declares war on the United States.

March 1917 [Jeannette Rankin](#) of [Montana](#) becomes the first woman member of the [United States House of Representatives](#)

April 1917 The United States declares war on Germany.

May 1917 – [Pope Benedict XV](#) promulgates the [1917 Code of Canon Law](#)

June 1917 – WWI: The first major German bombing raid on London by fixed-wing aircraft leaves 162 dead and 432 injured

July 1917 [East St. Louis riot](#): A labor dispute ignites a [race riot](#) in [East St. Louis, Illinois](#), which leaves 250 dead.

August 1917– The [Green Corn Rebellion](#), an uprising by several hundred farmers against the WWI draft, takes place in central [Oklahoma](#).

September 1917 – [Leon Trotsky](#) is elected Chairman of the [Petrograd Soviet](#)

October 1917 – [Miracle of the Sun](#) at [Fátima, Portugal](#).

November 1917 - [Battle of Jerusalem \(1917\)](#) begins with the [Egyptian Expeditionary Force](#) launching attacks against [Ottoman](#) forces in the [Judean Hills](#).

This is the world of 1917, a world at war, battles raging on land and in the air the sun seeming to dance, a world turned upside down.

But someone here in NYC was writing a Christmas melody that would become famous. One that we would hear tonight, 100 years later. With the refrain of Venite Adoremus playing in his mind, he heard the melody. And wrote it down with the words

Nell'umile capanna
nel freddo e povertà
è nato il Santo pargolo
che il mondo adorerà.

Osanna, osanna cantano
con giubilante cor
i tuoi pastori ed angeli
o re di luce e amor.

In the midst of a world at war, Pietro Yon, organist here wanted to lift up people's minds and hearts to the message of Christmas. God chose to enter this broken and chaotic world and be part of it.

Can you imagine? Can you see Pietro Yon playing the organ and premiering the song here in this place 100 years ago. Can you imagine who was sitting where you are sitting now?

All those people with their hopes and dreams. And here we are 100 years later, hearing the same stories and the same song with all our hopes and dreams. Knowing that in the midst of our chaotic and war-torn world, God comes. God is here. God is born into our world, our heart, our lives.

Venite Adoremus, Venite Adoremus, Venites adoremus
Dominum.