



Book of the Month

***Christmas Bells* by Jennifer Chiaverini**

Book Review by Maureen Lang, Friends of the Starkville Library Board Member

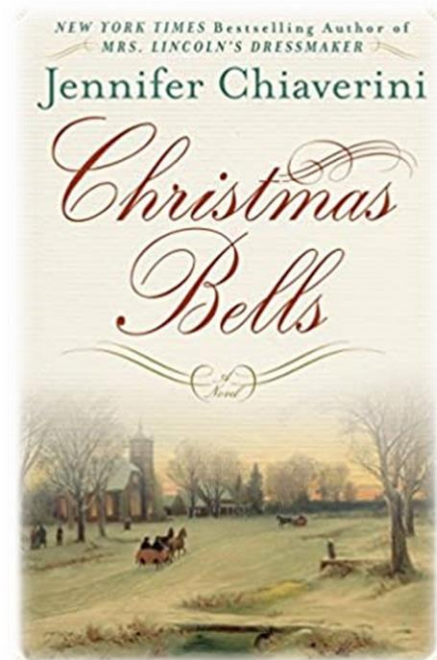
"I heard the bells on Christmas day. . ."

Many people look forward to the Christmas season when we get to sing our favorite Christmas carols along with CD's, the radio, or at church. But how many times do we know what chain of events brought forward the idea of those songs? *Christmas Bells* by Jennifer Chiaverini takes care of that mystery for this well-known Christmas carol.

The story revolves around three present day families who all are involved in one way or another through St. Margaret's Catholic Church in Boston. Opposite these three present day lives, is the story of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his family in the same setting, only a hundred years earlier.

Will Lucas and Sophia, who are responsible for directing the children at the Christmas concert, ever stop wasting time with other romantic interests and find each other? What about the mother and her two children from the choir who haven't had any word from their dad, a soldier deployed to Afghanistan, for several weeks? Then there is the Senator and his wife, who donate so much to the church, and must face the end of his political career and maybe the beginnings of hers. Balance this with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, his seemingly perfect family, and how their lives are forced to change and adjust while the nation faces the beginning of the Civil War.

This story has it all: romance, drama, inspiration, and historical relevance, all through the time leading up to the Christmas season. It is a tale that is uplifting, but not sappy. It gives hope and relevance in a time when we all must choose to move forward into life's many challenges. This is a book that will get you in the mood for the holidays without any commercialism or hype: it is the perfect way to start the season.



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