



Then Emily took a breath and said, “The good news is that you can start moving into that bigger townhouse tonight if you want...” Julie was thrilled. This meant that she could fulfill her dream of being a foster mom. With the bigger place, there’d be room enough for one more child. This dream started with little Michael, Jayshaun’s best friend, who needed foster care but Julie couldn’t take him in... she didn’t have enough space or enough money. There was definitely enough love. Things turned out ok for Michael but ever since that experience, Julie’s been bound and determined to make a difference in some child’s life and become a foster mom.

Julie sat there feeling happy – really happy - but she didn’t want to get too excited because you know when someone starts out saying, “... the good news is ... ” that typically means that the next thing they’re going say is “... and the bad news is ... ” But that’s not what happened. No, that crafty Emily, she was anticipating this and decided to save the best for last. “The better news...” she started out and then paused. Emily could hardly contain herself. She felt like Santa Claus herself as she went on to say, “The better news is that some folks want to donate some money to help you out this Christmas and really make a difference in your life.”

“Oh my Goodness! I can’t believe it!” Julie was stunned. She didn’t even know how to react. Emily left and Julie got the kids in the car. She was a bundle of nerves. She felt like she was going throw up. As best she could, Julie explained what it was all about to the kids and how this Christmas held some special surprises. She kept saying to herself, “Thank you Jesus!” Julie knew that good things came her way whenever she was going to church. It never failed but this, this was so amazing. She felt like she’d won the lottery. By the time they had made it over to the church to the sleepover, they were *extremely* late; but when everyone heard what happened, they were all surprised and happy.

Surprises... that’s what Christmas means to a lot of us. Take Betsy for instance, her dad was all about surprises. He would work until about noon on Christmas Eve and then spend the afternoon getting his surprises together, coming home late and wrapping them up. Oh it was all so fun and spontaneous. But Christmas can mean a lot of different things. To some of us, it’s about tradition. No doubt you’ve all heard about the wonderful, delicious, famous Norwegian Lefse made with Great Auntie Inga’s recipe. If you haven’t heard about it, be sure to ask Brenda, she’ll be glad to tell you all about Lefse. It’s one of those foods that is so deeply embedded in the Christmas tradition in her family that for generations without the Lefse, well,