



# CHAT

Vol 2, Issue 12  
December, 2022

*TO APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF  
A SNOWFLAKE, IT IS NECESSARY  
TO STAND OUT IN THE COLD*



## FMHS

Susan Elke, President  
Bev Drake, V.P.  
Maria Soutar, Secretary  
Sue Heth, Treasurer



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## MERRY CHRISTMAS WISHES

Christmas is full of excitement, twinkling lights, and anticipation for some—for others it can be a time for being thankful for life and reflection—or, it can be a time of stress and anxiety trying to fulfill what we see as expectations that the holidays can bring. This isn't the first time I've said this, but **be kind to yourself this season and stay in touch with the moment.**

For 71 years of my life, I had a live Christmas tree. Following my husband's death, I was determined to not let my grief ruin my favorite holiday. Change is difficult, but I decided to get a "retro" silver tree—and, I haven't looked back. With life changes, I had to rewrite my Christmas expectations and choose an option that was doable for me—it was hard at first, but now it is okay. I encourage you to make any needed changes in your life....a step at a time.

Mark your calendars for our annual Support Group Christmas party on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7pm, at the First Baptist Church basement. It promises to be a lot of fun! Llama Leaders 4-H group will be bringing their llamas. See you there!

***“Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” Luke 2:15***

The life of author **Charles Dickens (England, 1800’s)** is a strange and inspiring story. During the period in which he was trying to formulate a new book to support his wife and two children (**a book which later became A Christmas Carol**) Dickens was consumed with thoughts and memories of his painful experience as a young child among poor laborers who were treated with cruelty, who suffered grievously in their poverty and abuse. He became obsessed with fears that he would one day be poor and abused again. The acquisition of money became his primary focus in writing, and the fear of having none consumed him.

His patient wife and children prayed and watched as Dickens began to roam the streets late at night to observe and understand humankind’s suffering. He was given the unusual experience **of God’s intervention** and protection through the visitation of a young beggar-girl “angel” who opened his eyes to the needs of others he encountered in the pits of poverty. He was shown how he could help. Through the impact of a series of encounters, God inspired Charles Dickens’ writing of an ageless tale in a very short time. It was the story of transformation and redemption of “Scrooge”, who had to face his past...his fears and angers, the root of his self-centered ways, his blindness to the suffering of others, his fear of being without the false security of money. Dickens was reminded by this angelic and prophetic child voice that he was in danger of becoming one who would give up everything that really mattered, to have money. And the tale of his own redemption through charity became a classic, that cold December 1843. He insisted the book be sold for a very small price, so that the poor might be able to afford a copy. It sold so many copies that first month, that he was still able to provide what his family needed financially! And for many years to come, **“God bless us, everyone!”** was visibly evident in that family, and for others, as well, when touched by the meaning of that legendary tale.

Throughout history, God has spoken to His people of **“the extraordinary” becoming visible and “ordinary”**, through His divine touch. The Shepherds were common, simple, poor folks, chosen to draw near the newborn Messiah...and to marvel at the plan of God to provide salvation in this extraordinary way. Out of the simplest setting, came the most glorious, generous gift!

We, too, are called to be generous, to believe that God can multiply our simple gifts in our gatherings, in our families, in our communities, in our world. Each one of us has something to offer, and money or resources to share that can make a big difference, when shared in love. We find out that it is in giving away, that we become wealthy and secure. During December, what better way to make your way to the manger, than by giving away, for the betterment of others, challenging the fears which hold you captive, forcing you to trust in God and in your ability to make a difference?

**As we learned from such old stories as “A Christmas Carol”, (and the Bible is full of such stories) human suffering and worry, depression and fear are as old as humankind. How we**

view our own brokenness and our compassion for the brokenness of others determines the extent to which we live at peace with ourselves and others. Giving, forgiving, praying, laughing, listening, believing, celebrating, grieving together, learning together, going the extra mile...these are my best advice for you as you approach the holiday season! "May God bless us, everyone!"

## DRAWN TOGETHER

### "A Class Act"

By: Mary Ellen Eversman

*Drawn Together "A Class Act"* is now available in time for Christmas at a cost of \$8.50. It is a children's book that gently addresses mental health issues. The book is available at the FMHS office located at 202 N Banker, Effingham, IL or for \$10, the book can be mailed by calling Sue Heth at 217-821-7737.

Mary Ellen has written *Drawn Together, "A Class Act"*, as an ongoing fundraiser for FMHS. Look forward to a special time to "Meet the Author," at a later date.



**THANKS TO –Sue Heth**

**From Taste of Home**

**Serves: 53**

**Ingredients:**

- 7 ½ Cups instant chocolate drink mix
- 1 package (25.6 oz) nonfat dry milk powder
- 2 ½ Cups confectioner's sugar
- 1 Cup powdered nondairy creamer
- 25 peppermint candies, crushed
- Miniature marshmallows

**Directions:** Combine the first five ingredients. Divide into gift bags or place in an airtight container, adding marshmallows as desired. Mix may be stored up to six months.

**To prepare:** Place 1/3 cup cocoa mix in a mug. Stir in hot milk or water and add extra marshmallows as desired.

**EXCITING NEWS!**

The FMHS brochures are printed and ready to go! If you know of any organization needing speakers, please contact: Sue Heth at 217-821-7737



**A HEARTFELT THANKS**  
**To FMHS Volunteers, who have been helping man the office, bringing treats to share, watering plants, dusting, mail pick up, and repairs, too!**  
**Janice Garry, Sue Yarnell,**  
**Maria Soutar,**  
**Susan Elke**



**In Kind Contribution: Phone Service/S. Heth**

**Donations: Christmas Decorations**  
**(Carol Johnson/Chuck Suttle)**

**Long Term Supporters:**  
**Paul & Virginia Koboldt Trust,**  
**100 + Women Who Care**

**Items needed for the office:**  
**File folders, inspirational books, games**

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

*"We remember your life, and celebrate the memories"*

ASK  
JANET

If you have questions for Janet, forward them to:

[info@familymentalhealthsupport.com](mailto:info@familymentalhealthsupport.com)

**"CHRISTMAS STRESS RELIEF"**

Danny Penman, PhD

Scientific studies have shown that mindfulness not only prevents depression, but that it also positively affects the brain patterns underlying day-to-day anxiety, stress, depression, and irritability so that when they arise, they dissolve away again more easily. Other studies have shown that regular meditators see their doctors less often and spend fewer days in hospital. Memory improves, creativity increases, and reaction times become faster

**\*Eat some chocolate** Reconnect with your senses A single bar of chocolate, for example, has over 300 different flavors. How many of them do you normally taste?

**\*Go for a short walk** Walking is one of the finest exercises and a brilliant stress reliever and mood booster. A good walk can put the world in perspective. Pay attention to all of the sights, sounds, and smells.

**\*Take a three-minute breathing space** When you're becoming angry, exhausted, anxious or stressed, it's difficult to remember why you should remain calm.

When you find that your mind has wandered, gently escort it back to full awareness and continue following the instructions on the track as best you can. Meditation helps "ground" you when your thoughts threaten to spiral out of control.

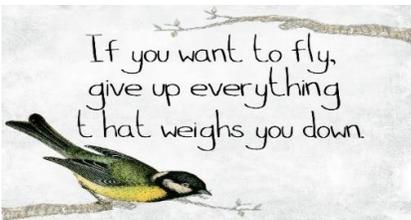
**\* Something pleasurable** At this time of year, exhaustion, stress, and unhappiness can easily dominate our lives. Be kind to your body. Have a nice hot bath; have a nap for 30 minutes. Do your favorite hobby; exercise; bake a cake; read something that gives you pleasure (not "serious" reading); listen to some music that you have not listened to in a long while.

**\*The 10-finger gratitude exercise** To come to a positive appreciation for the small things in your life, you can try the gratitude exercise. It simply means that once a day you should bring to mind 10 things that you are grateful for, counting them on your fingers.

**\* Do the sounds and thoughts meditation** Sounds are as compelling as thoughts and just as immaterial and open to interpretation. The sound of Jingle Bells or White Christmas might cheer you up — or send you into an emotional tailspin. Sensing the power of sound — and its relationship to thoughts and emotion — is central to mindfulness and to becoming a happier, more relaxed and centered person.

**\* Reclaim your life** Think back to a time in your life when things seemed less frantic, before the time when some tragedy or increase in workload took over your daily existence. Recall in as much detail as you can some of the activities that you used to do at that time. Choose one of these activities and plan to do it today or over this weekend. It may take five minutes or five hours, it might be important or trivial, it might involve others or it could be by yourself. It is only important that it should be something that puts you back in touch with a part of your life that you had forgotten.

**\* Visit the movies** Ask a friend or family member to go with you to the movies — but this time, with a difference. Go at a set time (say 7 p.m.) and choose whatever film takes your fancy only when you get there. Often, what makes us happiest in life is the unexpected — the chance encounter or the unpredicted event. Movies are great for all these.



## INSPIRATIONAL STUDY

**An Inspirational Study Group is being held monthly at the FMHS office on the fourth Tuesday of the month, 1-2pm. The December meeting will be . Dec. 27th. We will continue discussing “The Four Agreements” Wisdom book by Don Miguel Ruiz. Handouts are provided for most group sessions, and it is not necessary to purchase a book.**

**For more information, call or text Sue at, 217-821-7737. Water is available, but feel free to bring your own drink. This is a Christian based discussion group that welcomes all.**

## **“THE CHOSEN” Discussion Group**

The FMHS Office is hosting a bi-monthly discussion group on the series, “The Chosen”, led by Rev. Carol Johnson. Each session uses a segment of the DVD series for Season 1, followed by a guided set of reflection questions. Sessions will be 4 to 5:30pm at the FMHS office located at 202 N. Banker St., Effingham, IL. There is no cost, and study guides will be provided. This is not a Bible Study, but participants may bring Bibles to assist in the biblical narrative on the life of Jesus. UPCOMING DATES are: Dec.1, Dec.15. To sign up, please leave a message for Sue Heth at 217-240-2330 or Carol Johnson at 270-217-1422

### **DECEMBER SUPPORT GROUP**

The FMHS next support group will meet on Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7pm at the First Baptist Church, 213 W. Fayette, Effingham, IL.

This will be our annual Christmas Party. We will be having pizza and drinks, the Llama Leaders, Christmas music, and fun. Bring your smile!!

## **2023 Membership Drive**

**Family Mental Health Support is financially supported by grants, memberships, and fundraisers. A \$10 membership is a way individuals can provide support toward our efforts to help families struggling with mental health issues. (All services are free, there is no paid staff. FMHS is an all-volunteer program.)**