

Boarding Homes Ministry *Dollar-a-Day* Weekly Readings

Dollar-a-Day Week One: “*The residents of the home have welcomed me, and cared for me. We have become family.*” These words are from a church member who visits in a boarding home. Boarding Homes Ministry nurtures Christian community by linking church visitors and residents of local homes. Love is shared as these new communities worship, pray, sing, and share life-in-Christ.

Who are the residents? They are gifted children of God. They are caring, and have much to teach the church about how God moves among the human condition. They often carry the weight of mental illness. ***What are homes?*** These are privately owned. BHM does not own these homes or run them, but gets permission to visit in them. ***Who are the team members who visit?*** They are gifted and loving people from a local church who open their hearts. In 2011 General Assembly presented these home communities the E.H. Johnson Award for *ministry at the cutting edge of mission*. The award recognized the urgent need for gracious, loving Christian communities.

The ***Dollar-a-Day*** fundraiser helps build these communities; and the fundraiser works like this: each household in our church is invited to set aside one dollar for the next forty days. Each week in church a reading will encourage participation, and importantly, raise for us issues of pastoral care that apply not only in the mental health community, but in all our lives. Boarding Homes Ministry thanks us for our partnership as together we foster loving, Christian communities and promote the care of those gifted and essential people who experience mental health problems.

Dollar-a-Day Week Two: “*Perhaps life is all about celebrating God and people*”. This statement of faith came from a boarding home resident.

This person knew all too well that life could be rough. Days were spent in poverty and isolation. Mental illness took its toll. And still this person of deep faith insisted: *life is about celebrating God and people*.

Residents often have rich insights into Christian life. Your support of the ***Dollar-a-Day*** project helps create home communities which give residents an opportunity to express their faith.

In thanksgiving, perhaps we can be moved by these words, and let ***devout joy*** shape all our relationships - in our families, our church, and neighbourhood. Perhaps life really is about celebrating God, and people.

Dollar-a-Day Week Three: “*What will become of compassion?*” During a visit to a boarding home a resident put this crucial question, “*What will become of compassion?*”

Compassion is vital to Christian life. It is not aloof. It is deeply engaged. It comes alive as people draw close, and extend loving care.

Your contributions to the ***Dollar-a-Day*** project help create intimate Christian gatherings which allow compassion to transform lives.

Compassion draws humanity together in Christ.

And so, the question remains for all of us: *for the sake of our worship, and for the sake of our personal relationships at home and in the church: What will become of compassion?*

Dollar-a-Day Week Four: “I don’t need hatred, I need tender care.” These challenging words came from a boarding home resident.

Too often in our society the brave and wonderful people who experience mental illness can have brutal words directed at them. Some get cruelly pushed aside. Isolation and contempt take a terrible toll. Where is justice? Where is gentle care?

Your *Dollar-a-Day* donation helps Boarding Homes Ministry raise issues of justice. It helps BHM form communities in which people are gently received and compassionately cared for.

Therefore, perhaps we might take the words of this resident to heart, and ponder our own roles in promoting justice and tender care wherever we move in family, congregation and neighbourhood.

Dollar-a-Day Week Five: “I have a lot to be thankful for, and still life is hard.” Here is a call to thanksgiving. It comes from a gifted and wise person who experiences very trying mental health problems.

To help congregations build deeper relationships with those who experience mental illness Boarding Homes Ministry has developed the ***Cat Jeffry Church School Curriculum***. It contains age-appropriate lessons for 12 year-olds, high school students, and adults.

Your *Dollar-a-Day* donation helps Boarding Homes Ministry develop teaching materials which equip Christians for pastoral care, and encourage Christians to draw closer to those valuable, insightful people who carry the weight of mental illness.

Please consider how you can be more involved in building Christian community.

Dollar-a-Day Week Six: “I need to talk to somebody who won’t judge me.” These words came from someone new to a boarding home visit.

Your support of the *Dollar-a-Day* project helps church members go out into their neighbourhoods and join with residents of boarding homes to develop places of generous welcome – places free of judgment.

God is glorified and life is enriched as Christians graciously set judgment aside. When judgment is absent lives can safely open up, and be met. People can then be cared for and nurtured.

The words of this resident invite all of us to consider our own Christian calling to create places of non-judgmental welcome; whether around our dinner tables or in our wider neighbourhood.

Dollar-a-Day Week Seven: “Spread love so that others can carry on.” These words from a boarding home resident call us back to the essence of Christian life. God is love. Christians will be known by their love. Therefore; spread love, it praises God and supports those who are having a difficult time.

In sadness, our ministry has noted that too often people with mental health problems are pushed away. The brave and blessed children of God who experience mental health problems have a great deal to teach us. They will bless us. We need them.

Your kind support of the *Dollar-a-Day* fundraiser helps promote loving community, and Boarding Homes Ministry thanks you.

Christian community is where we flourish and where we find our deepest home. May grace abound among us all as we continue to rejoice in the God of loving communion.