

Shepherd's Staff

February 2025

We gather to worship, we go to serve our Lord.

“You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth!”

Parkersburg Christian Reformed Church

Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m. ~ Church School 10:45 a.m



Groundhog Day and God?

Source: <https://www.ogchurchofchrist.org/its-groundhog-day/>

Have you ever had one of those days that you just wish you could do over again? In asking this question, I am reminded of one of my all-time favorite movies, *Groundhog Day* starring Bill Murray.

In the movie, the main character Phil Connors is a very self-centered man filled with cynicism and scorn with regard to virtually everyone and everything. Phil ends up repeating the same day, February 2, 1993, every time he wakes up. Each morning at precisely 6:00 am, he awakes to the same song and same radio declaring, “*It’s Groundhog Day!*”

As the movie progresses and as Phil’s awareness that he is stuck in some kind of *time-loop* develops, he begins to experiment and attempt to change up the events of the day. At first he experiments by engaging in highly immoral activities and finds no satisfaction. As he begins to grow more despondent with his situation, he engages in criminal activities, such a bank robbing, etc.

Finally, in desperation, he kidnaps the groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, and drives off a cliff only to wake up once again in his hotel room. After this, he commits suicide in a number of different ways, each time waking up to, “*It’s Groundhog Day!*”

Toward the end of the movie, he reveals his situation to one of the other characters, who suggests that he use the repeated day as an opportunity to improve himself. He puts the suggestion into action and throughout the rest of the film uses his knowledge gathered by repeating the same day over and over again to save lives and to befriend most of the townsfolk. He even manages to redeem his reputation as a first-class jerk with his coworkers. At last, when he is accepted as no longer being the arrogant, self-centered man that he once was, he wakes up and finds that it is now February 3rd.

His transformation is now complete and he is not the same man that he had been on February 1st. Of course, this movie is highly fictitious and devoid of Christian concepts. Yet there are a number of things about the movie that serve to emphasize the need for self-examination and for the transformation of character needed by the Christian.

Christian Application to Groundhog Day

Some of the events of the movie remind me of Solomon's experimentation to find the secret of true happiness. In Ecclesiastes 2:1-11, Solomon lists quite a number of things he attempted to do in order to find true meaning in his life. He sought after hedonism and folly, materialism and beauty, wealth and women, work and wisdom (worldly), but none of it was to any avail. And so, he stated,

"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun..." – Ecclesiastes 2:11



Later, Solomon reveals the true secret of happiness,

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." – Ecclesiastes 12:13

In the movie, when Phil first begins his journey of self-improvement, he begins by trying to stop doing and saying the awful kinds of things he had been used to, up to that point in his life, yet it still was ineffective. But only when he began to replace those bad habits with new knowledge and a better outlook on life, did he begin to feel he was making any progress, until finally these new habits brought about a complete personality makeover.

This reminds me of Paul's epistle to the Colossians, especially Colossians 3:8-10.



"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." – Colossians 3:8-10

From this we learn that it is not enough just to simply stop sinning, but we must replace our sinful works by doing the work of the Lord.

A final attribute of the film is the concept of second chances. Phil keeps getting the opportunity for a *do-over*.

We cannot, as Phil did, go back and undo the things we did yesterday, or escape all of their consequences, but we do have the opportunity every day to repent of our sins. We have the opportunity each day to not repeat the mistakes and transgression of the previous day. We have the opportunity each day to decide to live for Christ and to seek first His kingdom.

Our God is truly a God of *second chances*. Peter stated,

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance..." – 2 Peter 3:9

But there is a limit to His longsuffering.

When we die, we don't get to wake up to, "*It's Groundhog Day!*" and try again.

At death, if we are still in our sins, we will have reached the end of God's longsuffering.

While we cannot live the same day over and over again until we get it right, we do have the opportunity to change and be transformed day by day.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day... 2 Corinthians 4:16



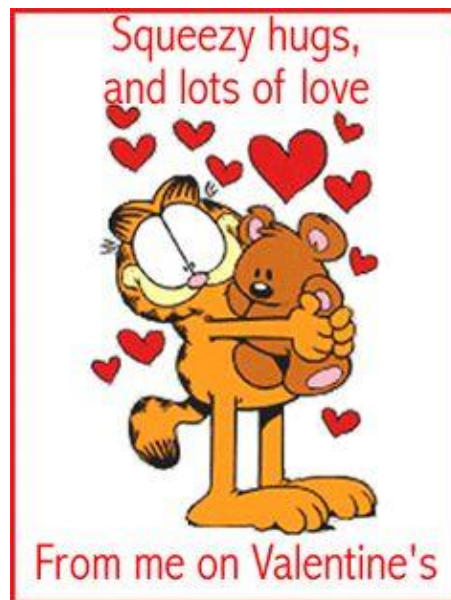
If you had the opportunity to live yesterday over again, what would you do differently?



- 2/1 Andrew Haan
- 2/7 Pat Prier
- 2/8 Mackenzie Allspach
- 2/10 Marlyn Allspach
- 2/17 Sharon Cordes
- 2/24 Rodney Mulder

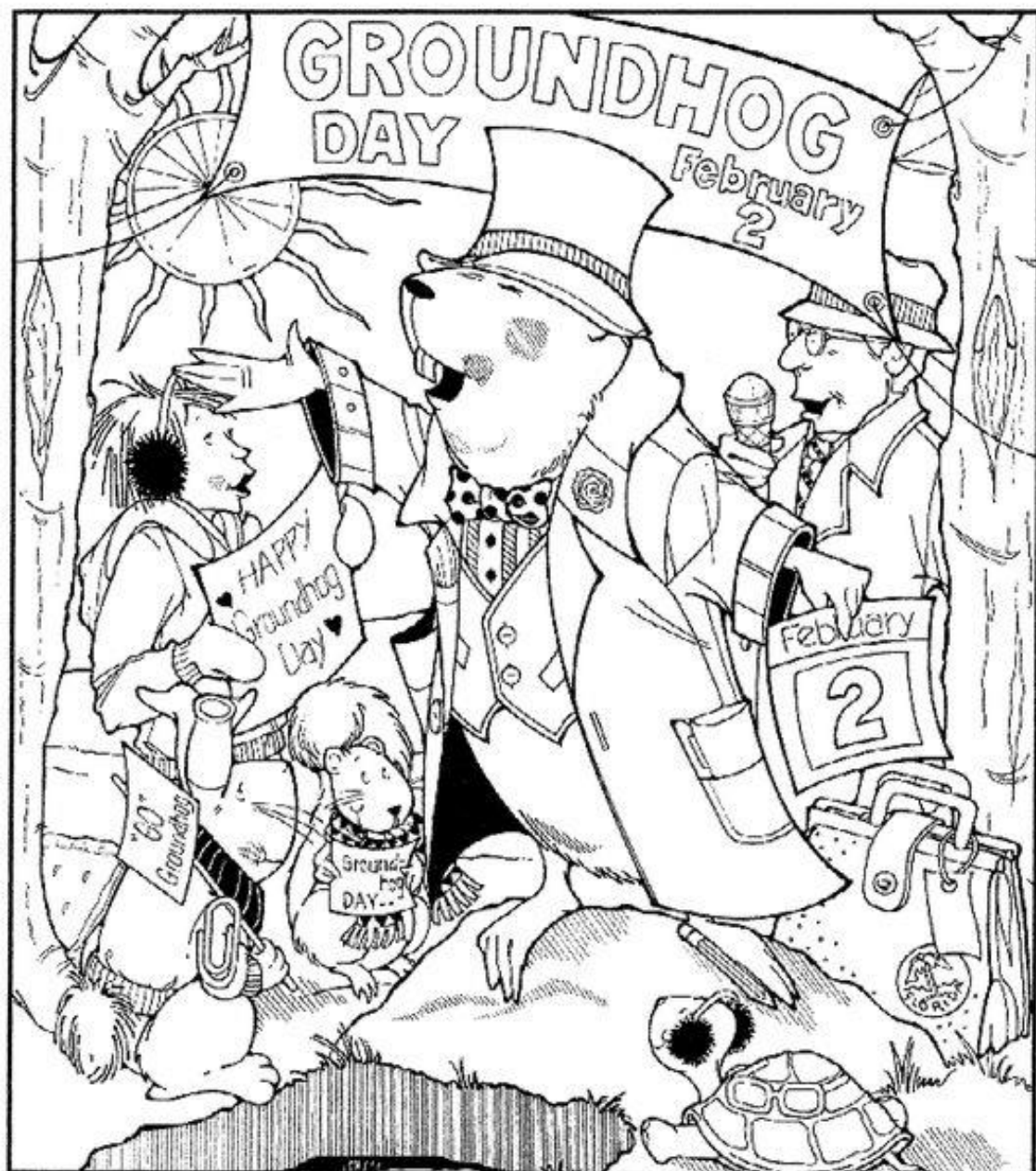


Reminder: If you have anything you'd like included in the Shepherd's Staff, please try to have it to Wendy Armstrong by the 20th of the month. The goal is to have the newsletter in your mailboxes on the last Sunday of the month.



The Groundhog Predicts . . .

By Susan Dahlman



05438

In the big picture, find these objects.



artist's brush



eyeglasses



pencil



slice of pizza



party hat



bird



boomerang



slice of orange



tulip



bottle



feather



banana



ice-cream cone



wishbone



domino



paper clip



mug