

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [January 31 Worship Service Video](#)

- Join the **HeBrews eCafé on Zoom** every Sunday at 10am for an hour of informal fellowship.
Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98193600858?pwd=K0lIOWMOZWdsRmhUTkNWcmFvbkM5Zz09> Phone in: 1 204 272 7920 Meeting ID: 981 9360 0858 Passcode: 438120
- The latest **Cool School video** lesson is available by clicking here: <https://youtu.be/GypX2IDMGYs>

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, January 31, 2021.

This Tuesday is Groundhog Day. I have long thought that it is peculiar observance living in Manitoba where “six more weeks of winter” and “an early spring” are pretty much the one and the same thing. Still I will be looking to see if a shadow is the forecast on Tuesday.

My sister has been referring to the pandemic as ‘Groundhog Day’. When I talk to her on the phone and ask how things are, she says ‘Groundhog Day.’

It is a reference to the movie of the same name starring Bill Murray. In that film, Murray plays a curmudgeonly TV weatherman who gets stuck in a snowstorm on February 2nd while covering a groundhog-sees-his-shadow event in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. For reasons unknown he finds himself waking up, and re-living, the same day over and over and over again. It is always February 2nd. He always gets stuck in a snowstorm. And he always wakes up the following morning in the same place. He is stuck in a temporal loop and every day seems just like the previous one.

I'm not sure that every day is the same as the day before but certainly we are living life as a slower pace these days, living in a somewhat repetitive pattern. There are fewer things to do and fewer places to go, fewer people to see and fewer opportunities to mix up our daily routines.

But isn't it true that going slower gives you a better view? At a fast pace things are blurry, details are missed, and mistakes are made. Slowing down is an opportunity to re-adjust our focus and pay attention to the things that matter most. There is value in a walk and much to be cherished in a phone call. There is a sense of accomplishment in learning something new and pride in finding ways to remain connected and continuing our communal life. We are adapting to the slower ways and there is no shame in saying that we are discovering the benefits even while we miss some of our favorite activities. Both things can be true at the same time.

Nature testifies to the value of slowing down. Animals hibernate in the winter to preserve their resources and await rebirth. Fallowed fields find their nutrients restored and their capacity for life enhanced. Scripture offers a similar lesson. For all his busy-ness Jesus recognizes his need to be removed from the crowds, to go off to a quiet place, to be alone in prayer, to find solitude for the sake of being empowered to return to a ministry of love and mercy.

The word of the moment is adaptability. We have discovered ways of adapting to a new, and hopefully temporary, reality. It has affected nearly every aspect of our daily lives from how we get groceries to who comes over for coffee. And it has had the same impact on our worship life. But we have adapted, and adjusted, and continued, and in the process, have learned something surprising about our capacity for adaptability that may prove to be a blessing for years to come.

Bill Murray breaks out of his Groundhog Day rut by using the gift of time to slowly transform himself from being someone who cares only for himself into someone who loves others, friends and strangers, with equal abandon. We might also use this slowed-down moment to learn more about love and what matters most. It is our choice to do so.

Every day is not the same. Every day is a new day. Every day is a gift from God. Thanks be to God.

Grace and peace,
Michael

P.S. An online Lenten Study is being planned for six Thursdays beginning February 18. More information:
<https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>

P.P.S. Read the scripture lesson for today by clicking here: [1 Corinthians 8:1-13](#)

P.P.P.S. Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The link for sharing is:
<https://youtu.be/K3MFweRp9lc>