

# The Lakeside



## Message in a bottle

Verse of the day for Monday February 2, 2026 - Ecclesiastes 7: 9

**9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools**

Read Ecclesiastes 7 for meditation and inspiration.



## Groundhog Day

Dear Lakesiders and Friends,

Here is a little story that seems so very apt for today.

On Groundhog Day, the town gathered before dawn, waiting to see whether the groundhog would glimpse his shadow. For Eli, the day felt familiar in another way. He had been living the same patterns for years—rising, working, worrying, sleeping—each day repeating the last, his heart restless and unchanged.

That morning, as church bells rang faintly in the cold air, Eli remembered a verse his grandmother once quoted: “His mercies are new every morning.” The words struck him. If God’s mercy was new, why did his life feel like it was on endless repeat?

As the groundhog emerged, Eli realized the problem was not time looping, but his own unwillingness to turn. Like Israel wandering in the desert, he had circled the

same fears and sins, hoping they would somehow resolve themselves. Repentance, he understood, was the step that broke the cycle.

Eli bowed his head and prayed, not for a different day, but for a changed heart. He asked God to teach him to forgive, to trust, and to love more faithfully. When he stood up, the world looked the same, but he was not.

Groundhog Day would return next year, as it always did. But Eli had learned a deeper truth: in Christ, even familiar days can become new, and no life is trapped when grace leads the way forward.

WOW! Shadow or no shadow we are called to move forward in God's mercy sensing His all-encompassing Grace upon Grace. We are able to sense that the powerful phrases from the Scripture in 2 Corinthians 5:17 ("old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new") and Revelation 21:5 ("Behold, I am making all things new") signify profound spiritual transformation, renewal, and hope for a fresh start. Indeed, "All things are made new," both personally for believers and for each church family as we call upon God for revival, redirection and rekindling of the Holy Spirit's out pouring of new life and new hope in our lives.

In the Spirit's Power,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roger".

Roger