

Shepherd's Staff

April 2023

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.

What's First

Have you noticed that something has changed in the years since I moved to Parkersburg? What used to be an understood policy has changed and it challenges something that we should be holding dear. What bothers me is the change in the observance of Sunday worship. The challenge comes from the excuse of loving our children but this I think is misguided. It seems that sports have taken over what is supposed to be the holy day for worship. I can see parents in a dilemma desiring the best and well-rounded school experience for their children, but what should come first?

This change happened so easily that we have to ask ourselves what happened to society that such a change could come about without any discussion or debate? Sports seem to be the new idol for the world with professional sports paying massive amounts of money to the athletes who make it to the top of the game. We even idolize the players who command attention because of their athletic ability not only in the professional ranks but also in the university level of play. The ability to play well is something that can be recognized and even celebrated but when we idolize the players, we cross a line that challenges our faith.

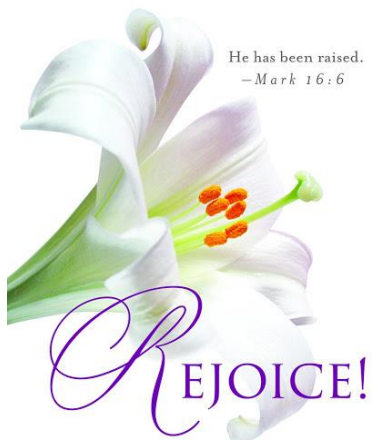
Scripture can help us to decide how to deal with the increased importance of sports in society today. Matthew 6:33 reminds us to "seek first the Kingdom of God and then all these things will be added." If we are seeking God first, then we should be more concerned with our worship than with the sports schedule. Yet what happens when sports schedules interfere with the worship hour? We see empty seats in church but filled seats in the sports arena.

There is a way that we can have the best of both worlds, but it takes discipline to make it work. We do place our worship on the internet for families that cannot attend church. The discipline comes in making time to watch the entire service with the family later. While this is an option, it still is not the desirable way for worship. When we are not in attendance, we miss out on the fellowship of believers that scripture tells us is crucial to our growth in the things of God.

The hard decision is whether to attend church or the sports events. As parents and even grandparents our love for our children can cloud our minds. Still scripture teaches that we are to seek God first. When we choose sports, we are placing God second or worse. While we as a single church will not have much effect on changing the sports hold on the world, we can at least teach our children that our faith is to be treasured much more than the temporary benefits of sports.

One alternative is always that summer sports are usually held during the week so our children will not miss out entirely on sports. This may be an alternative to the school system challenging our need to worship in a day and age when religion is so desperately needed in all aspects of life. So the question remains, what is first in our lives, God or sports?

Pastor Rus





Hot Cross Buns

Prep Time: 20 mins **Cook Time:** 20 mins **Additional Time:** 1 hrs 45 mins **Total Time:** 2 hrs 25 mins

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup warm water (110 degrees F/45 degrees C)
¼ cup white sugar
1 large egg
1 large eggs, separated, divided
3 tablespoons butter, softened
1 tablespoon active dry yeast
1 tablespoon instant powdered milk
⅜ teaspoon salt
¾ cup dried currants
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons water
½ cup confectioners' sugar
2 teaspoons milk
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

Put flour, warm water, 1/4 cup white sugar, egg, egg white, butter, yeast, milk powder, and salt in a bread maker and start on dough program.

When 5 minutes of kneading are left, add currants and cinnamon. Leave in the machine until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

3. Punch down dough on a floured surface, cover, and let rest for 10 minutes.
4. Shape into 12 balls and place in a greased 9x12-inch pan. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, 35 to 40 minutes.
5. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
6. Mix egg yolk with 2 tablespoons water in a small bowl; brush on dough.
7. Bake in the preheated oven until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Remove from pan immediately and cool on wire rack.
8. Mix together confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla until smooth. Place glaze in a piping bag or a sandwich bag with the corner snipped off; pipe a cross onto each roll.

To Make Dough in a Stand Mixer:

Combine warm water and yeast in the bowl of the mixer and let soften for about 5 minutes. Add flour, milk powder, 1/4 cup white sugar, egg, egg white, and salt. Mix, scraping the dough down occasionally, on low speed using the dough hook for 10 minutes. Add butter, currants, and cinnamon and mix for an additional 5 minutes. Transfer dough to a greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap and a kitchen towel, and allow it to rise until doubled, about 1 hour. Proceed with the recipe instructions.



April Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

4/4 Kevin Meester
 4/5 Shelly Meester
 4/8 Mary Johnson
 4/10 Michael Allspach
 4/22 Paul Bruns

Happy Anniversary

4/30 Rollyn & Kathy DeGroot



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.



Christ has not only spoken to us by his life, but has also spoken for us by his death.
 ~ **Soren Kierkegaard**

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"
 ~ **Jesus Christ – John 11:25, 26**

Easter Word Search

G S N O I T P M E D E R Y Y M
J J U Y K I R Y T T F X E O L
R L K F W E E C I O J E R C K
X Y N G Q C U W V U P C M C K
R C R O S S H R E D P H M N E
I F V A I B Q U I R G P Q R N
S A Q Z M T M I R A C L E T S
E I A O I R C H R C O Y I U E
N T T P R C G E Y O H S S R L
I H H S O O C A R K I E P V K
N W O R C S D U B R J V R G T
O H T N G N T E S F U L A M I
D P V O U Q F L D K A S Y S H
Z M E S B Z Z W E M L Y E D F
E T G L M E G K B S L T R R U

APOSTLES
CROWN
LAMB
PRAYER
RESURRECTION
SON

CHURCH
FAITH
MARY
REDEMPTION
RISEN
SUNDAY

CROSS
JESUS
MIRACLE
REJOICE
SAVIOR
TOMB

