

Alcohol Policy for Diocese of Southern Ohio

Concerning Alcoholic Beverages in the Local Parish:

The Episcopal Church does not prohibit the use of beverages containing alcohol among adult members. This Church also supports and has a responsibility to those people who abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages for whatever reason. Many churches do not serve alcoholic beverages at social functions, but for those which do, the following guidelines must be followed:

- All applicable federal, state, and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to persons not of legal age to consume alcohol. Service of alcohol must be monitored and those showing signs of intoxication must not be served. Whenever alcohol is served, the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge must appoint an adult to oversee its serving. That adult must not drink alcoholic beverages during the time of his or her execution of his or her responsibilities.
- Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal attractiveness and accessibility. Suggested suitable drinks include tea, coffee, lemonade, soft drinks, fruit juices, and flavored waters.
- Alcoholic options include beer or wine. Distilled spirits, such as vodka or whiskey, may not be served at Church functions.
- The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event (e.g., “cocktail party”, “theology on tap”, “beer and wine”).
- Food must be served when alcohol is present, and the serving of alcoholic beverages should conclude well before guests are scheduled to leave.
- The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the vestry. Such groups or organizations must also assume responsibility for those persons who might become intoxicated and must provide alternative transportation for anyone whose capacity to drive may be impaired.

Recognizing the effect of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, it would be advisable to consider the nature of the function at which alcohol beverages are to be served. Alcohol should not be served before or during a business meeting of the congregation, vestry, mission council, or other committee charged with oversight of church mission or governance.

If participants at a church event are paying separately for alcoholic drinks, the event is publicized to the general public, or if alcohol is not accompanied by a meal, special liability

insurance coverage beyond the usual prices of the church will most likely be required. Consult with your insurance carrier and Ohio Department of Liquor Control well in advance of the event.

The use of other illegal mood-altering substances is forbidden at any function of the congregation.

Sacramental wine must be stored in a safe and secured cabinet under the control of the clergy and altar guild.