



The Episcopal Church in South Carolina



ALCOHOL USE POLICY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

1. The Church must provide a safe and welcoming environment for all people, including people in recovery.
2. All applicable federal, state and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors, as well as any chemical usages other than alcohol that are also clearly controlled under the same laws.
3. Some congregations may decide not to serve alcohol at events or gatherings. Others may decide to permit a limited use of alcoholic beverages at church-sponsored events. Both can be appropriate if approached mindfully.
4. Whenever alcohol is served, the Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge must assure that responsible persons are in control of the serving of alcohol. Thus the church group or organization holding an event on church property must also assure that care is taken to insure this control, thus assuming responsibility for those who might become intoxicated.

The Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge must be sure that the person appointed must not consume any alcoholic beverages during the time that they are overseeing a church event and take responsibility for recognizing that the use of alcohol may lead to unacceptable behavior in some people in which case that designated person or persons must monitor all those showing signs of intoxication, and for that person (or persons) arrange for responsible transportation home.

Whether consumed in glass or in bottles, alcoholic beverages should be served rather than left on tables for “self-pour”.

5. When serving alcoholic beverages at congregational events, (whether on or off church property) the presence of minors (those under the age of 21) is strongly discouraged. Should minors be present, alcohol must be served at a separate station that is monitored at all times to prevent underage drinking.
6. Alcoholic beverages and food containing alcohol must be clearly labeled as such.
7. Whenever alcohol is served, appealing non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal prominence and accessibility.
8. The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events (meaning ministries inside or outside the church proper) should not be publicized as an attraction of the event, e.g. “Wine and Cheese Reception,” “Cocktail Party,” and “Wine and Beer Tasting.”

9. Food must always be served when alcohol is present, and when the event is concluded all alcoholic beverages are to be removed from the church premises as soon as possible afterwards.

10. Outside groups or organizations sponsoring an activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the Clergy and/or 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. Consulting with liability insurance carriers is advised.

11. Recognizing the effects of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, alcoholic beverages shall not be served when the business of the Church is being conducted, including Vestry meetings, and the meetings of authorized committees or sub-committees of the church.

12. Clergy shall consecrate an appropriate amount of wine when celebrating the Eucharist and perform ablutions in a way that does not foster or model misuse.

(Revised 8/14/16, Approved by Diocesan Council 10/27/16, passed by Annual Diocesan Convention 11/12/2016)