

PROPOSED RESOLUTION #5:

RESOLUTION FOR AN ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY FOR THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

RESOLVED, that the following “Alcohol and Drug Policy for the Episcopal Church in South Carolina” be adopted by each parish church and worshipping community of the Diocese.

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 appoint an adult who must not drink any alcoholic beverages during the time that they are overseeing the event that includes the serving of alcohol. During the event, that person must monitor all those showing signs of intoxication. Should someone become even mildly intoxicated it is the responsibility of the person designated to oversee the event to arrange responsible transportation home for that person. In addition, if hard liquor is served, a “certified” server is required. 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 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.

13. We encourage clergy to acknowledge the efficacy of receiving the sacrament in one kind.

14. This policy should be visibly posted in all church kitchens.

Explanation:

The House of Bishops concurring, the 78th General Convention recognized that the field of substance use disorders and addiction has advanced substantially since 1985 when the 68th General Convention passed the current policy, acknowledging that alcohol use, addiction and recovery all involve biological, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. Recent developments within the body of the Diocese of Maryland caused that diocese and all dioceses to re-examine their policies regarding the use of alcoholic beverages as well as the use of any and all substances that impair the normal functioning of human beings and, in doing so, the House of Bishops concurring, passed Resolution A159 under the title “The Role of the Church in the Culture of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse.”

The Episcopal Church in South Carolina assumes equal concern for those suffering from alcohol and substance abuse and seeks to ameliorate those concerns on a diocesan-wide basis for all parishes and congregations of the Episcopal Church in South Carolina by its creation of an Alcohol and Drug Abuse Sub-Committee of the Diocesan Council.

Movers:

Sub-Committee of Diocesan Council: The Rev. Dr. David Williams, Chair; the Rev. Faith Bledsoe, the Rev. Rick Lindsay, Mrs. Barbara Mann, the Rev. John Zahl