

Alcohol Policy for the Diocese of Western Massachusetts

The alcohol use policy adopted by the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, reads as follows:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, that the 78th General Convention acknowledge The Episcopal Church's long-standing tolerance for the use of alcohol which, in some cases, has contributed to its misuse, and has undermined a climate of wholeness and holiness for all; that our Church culture too often avoids hard conversations about alcohol use, and the role of forgiveness and compassion in healing and recovery; and that The Episcopal Church now commits to create a new normal in our relationship with alcohol. We aspire to be a place in which conversations about alcohol, substance misuse, or addiction are not simply about treatment but about renewal, justice, wholeness, and healing. We affirm that Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church has long been and continues to be a valuable resource for this work; and be it further

Resolved, that, mindful of the emerging legalization of other addictive substances and the increasing rise of addiction, the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church provide for the ready availability, implementation, and continuing development of this policy churchwide, in consultation and coordination with Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church.

Resolved, that the 78th Convention adopt the following policy on alcohol and other substance misuse and encourage dioceses, congregations, seminaries, schools, young adult ministries, and affiliated institutions to update their policies on the use of alcohol and other substances with the potential for misuse. These policies should consider the following:—

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.
3. Some dioceses and 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. When alcohol is served, it 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. If hard liquor is served, a certified server is required.
5. Serving alcoholic beverages at congregational events where minors are present is strongly discouraged. If minors are present, alcohol must be served at a separate station that is monitored at all times to prevent underage drinking.
6. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Food prepared with alcohol does not need to be labeled provided the alcohol is completely evaporated by the cooking process; however, it is recommended that even in this case the use of alcohol in cooking be noted on a label.
7. Whenever alcohol is served, appealing non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal prominence and accessibility.

Alcohol Policy for the Diocese of Western Massachusetts

8. The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event, e.g. "wine and cheese reception," "cocktail party," and "beer and wine tasting."
9. Ministries inside or outside of congregations will make certain that alcohol consumption is not the focus of the ministry and that drinking alcohol is not an exclusively normative activity. 9. Food must be served when alcohol is present.
10. The groups or organizations sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the clergy 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.
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 and consider providing non-alcoholic wine;

And be it further Resolved, that, mindful of the emerging legalization of other addictive substances and the increasing rise of addiction, the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church provide for the ready availability, implementation, and continuing development of this policy churchwide, in consultation and coordination with Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church.

And be it further Resolved, that this policy supercede and render moot all previous alcohol use policies in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, and be it further

Resolved, that this policy be commended for consideration to every Vestry and Executive Committee of The Diocese of Western Massachusetts.

Note: this is simply meant as an example of how a parish might create their policy based on the considerations of the TEC policy.

Alcohol Policy for St. Swithins

Based on the Resolution of the 78th convention of the Episcopal Church, and affirmed by the Diocesan Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts on April 27, 2017, St. Swithins acknowledges The Episcopal Church's long-standing tolerance for the use of alcohol which, in some cases, has contributed to its misuse, and has undermined a climate of wholeness and holiness for all; that our Church culture too often avoids hard conversations about alcohol use, and the role of forgiveness and compassion in healing and recovery; and that The Episcopal Church now commits to create a new normal in our relationship with alcohol. We aspire to be a place in which conversations about alcohol, substance misuse, or addiction are not simply about treatment but about renewal, justice, wholeness, and healing. We affirm that Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church has long been and continues to be a valuable resource for this work; and be it further

Alcohol Policy for the Diocese of Western Massachusetts

Resolved, that vestry of St. Swithins adopt the following policy on alcohol and other substance misuse and encourage dioceses, congregations, seminaries, schools, young adult ministries, and affiliated institutions to update their policies on the use of alcohol and other substances with the potential for misuse.

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. Specifically, we note these local laws:

3. Given that our parish hosts numerous AA meetings, and we recognize that our brothers and sisters struggle with alcohol abuse, we will not serve alcohol at parish events or gatherings.

OR

3. Our parish will permit a limited use of alcoholic beverages at church-sponsored events under the following conditions:

When alcohol is served, it 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. If hard liquor is served, a certified server is required.

Serving alcoholic beverages at congregational events where minors are present is strongly discouraged. If minors are present, alcohol must be served at a separate station that is monitored at all times to prevent underage drinking.

Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Food prepared with alcohol does not need to be labeled provided the alcohol is completely evaporated by the cooking process; however, it is recommended that even in this case the use of alcohol in cooking be noted on a label.

Whenever alcohol is served, appealing non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal prominence and accessibility.

The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event, e.g. "wine and cheese reception," "cocktail party," and "beer and wine tasting."

Ministries inside or outside of congregations will make certain that alcohol consumption is not the focus of the ministry and that drinking alcohol is not an exclusively normative activity.

Food must be served when alcohol is present.

Alcohol Policy for the Diocese of Western Massachusetts

The groups or organizations sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the clergy 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.

4. 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.
5. Our Clergyperson shall consecrate an appropriate amount of wine when celebrating the Eucharist and perform ablutions in a way that does not foster or model misuse. We will acknowledge the efficacy of receiving the sacrament in one kind and consider providing non-alcoholic wine.

Further Resources

Episcopal Recovery Ministry: <http://www.episcopalrecovery.org>

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

Created by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, an office in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Their website, Prevlene, reports to have "the world's largest resource for current information and materials concerning substance abuse".

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

This federal agency site includes access to full-text NIAAA publications and other databases, including ETOH, one of the most comprehensive online databases for abstracts and bibliographic references about alcohol abuse and alcoholism resources. Updated monthly, ETOH contains research findings from the late 1960s to the present, as well as historical research literature.

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

NCADD is a voluntary health organization formed in 1944. This site contains resources for parents and youth and gives a historical perspective of alcoholism research and the NCADD's work.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive

Hosted at the University of Michigan, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has collected research data on the subject. SAMHSA is also a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Approved by the Diocesan Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts on April 27, 2017