

Policy On Use of Specific Gaming For Fund Raising

By Congregations of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts

The Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts has committed itself to a stated mission of “Celebrating God’s Abundance.” Within that context, the Diocese affirms that gambling is a form of injustice as it pretends to offer something for nothing, deprives many the ability to provide for their needs while creating a profit for a few, is self-focused as it fails to provide for the needs of others, becomes a risk of enslavement, and constitutes a predatory business directed at offering the allure of gain in contests that are weighted to create profit for business owners.

At the same time, the Diocese recognizes the discretion of parishes to sponsor specific and time limited events where the stated purpose of the event is to encourage giving to further the mission and ministry of Christ and the church to others. It is important for parishes to clearly state the intention of fund raising for mission, to refrain from games of chance that do not give each participant an equal chance of winning, and to ensure that no person is required to participate as a requirement of attendance.

Each parish will have to weigh the potential risks of any gaming activity against the need to love each neighbor, especially those for whom gambling presents an issue of conscience, temptation, or risk. Furthermore, parishes are reminded that such events are specific to a mission or ministry and time limited, as regularly scheduled gaming events are, essentially, gambling businesses.

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