

# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TENNESSEE

## ALCOHOL USE POLICY

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 at church-sponsored events, it must be monitored and those showing signs of intoxication must not be served, and the Church must provide access to alternative transportation for anyone whose capacity to drive may be impaired. Also, when 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.
5. Serving alcoholic beverages at church-sponsored 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.
8. The serving of alcoholic beverages at church-sponsored events will not be publicized as the main 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.
10. Food must be served when alcohol is present.

11. Outside groups or organizations sponsoring an activity or event on Church property 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 access to alternative transportation for anyone whose capacity to drive may be impaired. Consulting with liability insurance carriers is advised.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. We encourage clergy to acknowledge the efficacy of receiving the sacrament in one kind and consider providing non-alcoholic wine.

*Adopted by Bishop and Council effective May 1, 2016*