

ALCOHOL AT CHURCH FUNCTIONS

Alcohol is not inherently evil. There are occasions where its use is appropriate, and we do not believe it should be prohibited by the Church. However, it is a drug which has risks attached to it whenever it is used. We also have a responsibility for those who choose not to drink. For these reasons the following is the policy to be observed at all church functions or on church property in the Diocese of California. This policy also applies to all institutions of the Diocese.

1. Alcoholic beverages and food containing alcohol shall not be used at business meetings, or to advertise or promote attendance at any business functions. Mixing business and alcohol is not appropriate.
2. When alcoholic beverages are offered, non-alcoholic beverages must also be made available. Non-alcoholic beverages must be served in an equally accessible and attractive manner as the alcoholic beverages.
3. Alcoholic beverages shall not be sold without a license. That's the law.
4. Any food or beverage made with alcohol must be clearly labeled. This also applies to any food in which the alcohol has been "cooked out".
5. A responsible member of the parish must be in control of the serving of alcoholic beverages during functions. Drunkenness is always inappropriate behavior.
6. The sponsor of an activity must take responsibility for -- and is legally liable for -- intoxicated persons. That's the law. This responsibility may include providing transportation home.
7. Invitations to events where alcohol is served shall be made only to members of the congregation, guests and friends -- never to the general public.
8. The final responsibility for distributing and following these guidelines lies with the clergy, wardens and vestry of a congregation.
9. This policy is to be disseminated to the congregation and to all users of church facilities, in the use agreement. A copy of this policy should become part of the use agreement for persons or organizations renting space (i.e. weddings.)

NOTE: If you have questions about any part of this policy, please phone us.

The Commission on Alcohol and Chemical Dependency
Episcopal Diocese of California