



# **The Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis**

## **Policy Regarding Alcoholic Beverages**

**(Including general principles regarding the abuse of  
addictive substances including alcohol)**

**Preamble**

The Episcopal Church has never endorsed prohibiting the use of beverages containing alcohol among adult members. We believe that all God's gifts are good and Jesus even offered an example of the use and serving of wine in His first miracle at Cana and in the institution of the Holy Eucharist. We affirm this truth at every communion when we come together to drink wine and eat bread in His name. Through this policy, we want to reaffirm our commitment to one another, and our trust in one another.

We desire an environment where we recognize that humans struggle from time to time to consume alcoholic beverages in ways that are positive, healthy, and in harmony with God's purposes for creation. God in Jesus Christ offers new life and the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our life and understanding. Church members should be educated regarding conditions that might compromise the health and safety of oneself and others. The Church also has a responsibility to support those people who choose to abstain from the consumption of alcohol for whatever reason.

Therefore, we adopt and commend the following principles and policy to aid our understanding of alcohol and other addictive substances.

### **General Principles Regarding the Abuse of Alcohol and Other Substances**

- The Diocese of Indianapolis recognizes that alcoholism and substance abuse are important health concerns in our society, and that abuse and drunkenness are inappropriate and unacceptable at Church events.
- Being mindful of the emerging legalization of other addictive substances and the increasing rise of addiction, the Church seeks to provide for the ready availability, implementation, and continuing development of this policy, in consultation and coordination with Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church.
- We acknowledge that abuse of and addiction to alcohol and other substances damage the body, mind, and spirit of the abuser, and we call on all clergy and laity to understand the seriousness of such substances to the abuser and to their family, friends, and associates.
- We further acknowledge the need for guidance and for healing ministry for those affected by alcoholism and substance abuse and also for those who have close personal relationships with them.
- Along with the dissemination of this diocesan alcohol policy, we encourage all diocesan organizations to provide opportunities for ongoing education and conversation about the use and abuse of alcohol and other substances.
- We further encourage all members of the Church to do everything in their power to live into their baptismal covenant and offer the love of Jesus Christ in His ministries of healing and reconciliation to all persons and families dealing with addiction of any kind.
- We are further mindful that no policy or principles are able to cover or anticipate every situation that may occur when faced with addiction and its treatment. Therefore, the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis asks for your continued prayer in applying these principles and this policy.

## **Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a structure for the reasonable and responsible use of alcohol within the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, including every parish, mission or other supported institution therein (hereafter referred to as “diocesan organizations.”) This policy is not intended to limit the authority of any diocesan organization from adopting additional requirements. This policy applies equally to Church-sanctioned events on and off the premises of any such organization.

1. The Church must provide a safe and welcoming environment for all people, including people in recovery.
2. Recognizing the effects of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, alcoholic beverages shall not be served or consumed when the business of the Church is being conducted.
3. Clergy shall consecrate an appropriate amount of wine when celebrating the Eucharist, and all Eucharistic ministers, clergy and lay, shall perform ablutions in a way that does not foster or model misuse.
4. We encourage clergy to teach the efficacy of receiving the sacrament in one kind and to consider providing non-alcoholic wine as an alternative.
5. Alcohol beverages on diocesan organizations’ premises must be locked away or securely stored.
6. All applicable federal, state and local laws are to be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors. For the purposes of this policy, an adult is defined as someone aged twenty-one and older.
7. When minors are present, serving alcoholic beverages is strongly discouraged in order to prevent underage drinking. On such occasions, alcohol must be served at a separate station that is monitored at all times. Alcoholic beverages are not to be consumed by adults while chaperoning minors during any Church-related activity.
8. Some diocesan organizations 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. No embarrassment, discomfort or inconvenience should ever be experienced by those who prefer not to have alcohol.
9. 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. In the situation when a clergy person is not available, the names of the overseeing persons and a copy of any appropriate licenses must be supplied

to the leadership of the diocesan organization or to the bishop's office. If hard liquor is served, a licensed bartender is required. Anyone showing signs of intoxication must not be served and are never to drive themselves from a premises or event. Individuals should feel empowered to prevent anyone from driving while intoxicated.

10. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. It is recommended that food prepared with alcohol be labeled as such, even if the alcohol is completely evaporated by the cooking process.

11. Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic beverage alternatives must always be offered in ample quantity with equal or better accessibility, attractiveness, and hospitality to beverages containing alcohol.

12. Food must be served when alcohol is present.

13. The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event, and alcohol consumption should not be the primary focus of a Church-sponsored event.

14. Non-diocesan groups or organizations sponsoring an activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the clergy or the vestry, Bishop's Committee, or comparable governing board. Such outside groups or organizations must be informed in writing that they assume moral and legal responsibility for those persons who might become intoxicated.

15. When an outside group or organization is using a diocesan organization's facilities for events at which alcoholic beverages will be served, a responsible person of the group must read and sign a copy of this policy, thus agreeing to abide by it. Consulting with liability insurance carriers is advised. The group or organization must provide proof of all applicable licenses and permits that may be required. They also must furnish proof of appropriate liability insurance naming the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis and the particular diocesan organization as additional parties insured. Such an insurance policy must cover the liability associated with alcohol consumption to the insured parties.

16. This diocesan alcohol policy or a diocesan organization's policy should be posted in a prominent location on the premises and be made known to all diocesan and organizational leadership.

17. Diocesan organizations are required to follow this policy in order to provide greater protection for the Church and its people.