

The Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania
Alcohol Use Guidelines

The diocese encourages congregations to not serve or allow the consumption of alcoholic beverages at their events or on their premises. When congregations choose to do so, the following guidelines are given:

Alcohol Use at a Congregationally Sponsored Event

1. All applicable federal, state and local laws must be obeyed, including those governing the prohibition of serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
2. Alcoholic beverages and food containing alcohol must be clearly labeled as such.
3. Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal attractiveness and accessibility.
4. The service of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event.
5. The clergyperson in charge of the congregation or, in cases where there is not a clergyperson, the Senior Warden or Bishop's Warden must have given permission for any activity or event at which alcoholic beverages will be served.
6. When alcohol is served, it must be monitored and those showing signs of intoxication must not be served. Whenever alcohol is served at a congregationally sponsored event, an adult must be appointed to oversee its serving. That adult must not drink alcoholic beverages during the time of his or her execution of his or her responsibilities.
7. 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.
8. Food must be served when alcohol is present.
9. No alcoholic beverages may be served at any event, program, trip or retreat for children or youth.
10. Hard liquor may never be served.
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. These policies apply to any congregationally sponsored event or activity, regardless of its location.

Alcohol Use at a Private Event Being Held at a Congregation*

1. All applicable federal, state and local laws must be obeyed, including those governing the prohibition of serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
2. Alcoholic beverages and food containing alcohol must be clearly labeled as such.
3. The clergyperson in charge of the congregation or, in cases where there is not a clergyperson, the Senior Warden or Bishop's Warden must have given permission for any activity or event at which alcoholic beverages will be served.
4. When alcohol is served, it must be monitored and those showing signs of intoxication must not be served. Whenever alcohol is served at a private event, a licensed bartender should be present to oversee its serving. The bartender must possess their own liability insurance.
5. The serving and consumption of alcohol may only occur in the parish hall or its equivalent.
6. Alcohol must be served in reasonably sized glasses or in single serve containers.
7. Hard liquor may never be served.

*All outside groups or individuals (including church members who have reserved a part of the church building for a private event such as a wedding reception, bridal shower, etc.) must have filled out an indemnification form prior to use of the building. Forms can be found on the diocesan website.

The Episcopal Church acknowledges the need for exercising a healing ministry and for offering guidance to victims of addiction and to members of their families.

The Church calls on all its members to take to heart the seriousness of the illness of addiction as a disrupter of family, economic, and social life, and to do everything in their power to offer the love of Christ in a healing ministry to those afflicted persons and families. It is expected that the leadership of each congregation be aware of local resources and programs in this area.