

Use of alcohol at church functions

Amended by the Council of Trustees, April 19, 2005

(Approved by Convention October 29, 1988)

1. Recognizing the unvarying effects of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, any church-related group should consider the nature of the function at which alcoholic beverages are proposed to be served in order to determine whether or not that function would be enhanced by the serving and use of such beverages. Meetings for which clear thinking and judgment are required are functions at which the prior consumption of alcoholic beverages is inappropriate. Examples of such meetings are Council of Trustees, Vestry and Advisory Councils; meetings dealing with financial, planning and program matters; meetings at which important elections are to occur; diocesan convention sessions (annual congregational meetings). Generally speaking, if significant matters are to be discussed, or important business transacted, a church-related group should postpone the serving of alcohol beverages until after such matters are dealt with.
2. Whenever alcohol is served in any form, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered. Non-alcoholic beverages must be served with the same attractiveness and accessibility as those containing alcohol, so that people who choose not to drink alcoholic beverages need not feel any embarrassment, discomfort or inconvenience in exercising their preference.
3. Any beverage which contains alcohol must always be clearly labeled as such. This also applies to any food (such as fruit compotes, desserts, etc.) where the alcohol has not been volatilized (i.e. "cooked out").
4. Although beverages and other foods containing alcohol may be offered together with non-alcoholic alternatives, they must never be promoted in such a way as to imply that partaking of them is any kind of social requirement.
5. Alcoholic beverages cannot be sold without license. Such a sale is in violation of Kansas state law.
6. Any occasion at which alcoholic beverages are to be offered should not be openly advertised as such (i.e., "Crab Feast" should be used instead of "Beer and Crab Supper," or "Bull Roast" should be used in place of "Beef 'n Beer"). The group of people sponsoring an event where alcohol is offered should be either a diocesan (parish) organization or a group of members of the diocese (parish) functioning as such. Invitations to affairs held on diocesan (parish) premises at which alcoholic beverages are to be offered should be issued only to the members and their guests and friends and never to the general public.
7. Although these guidelines recognize the positive social value of the use of alcoholic beverages, they also recognize that drunkenness is always unacceptable Christian behavior. Care must be taken to insure that responsible people are in control of the serving of alcoholic beverages. The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must also assume responsibility for those people who might become intoxicated. Such responsibility includes providing alternative transportation for anyone whose driving might be impaired.