

The Use of Alcoholic Beverages at Church Functions and on Church Property

The following policy is observed throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi.

- Any beverage which contains alcohol should always be clearly identified as such; this also applies to any food (such as fruit compotes, desserts, etc.) where the alcohol has not been volatilized (“cooked out”).
- Whenever alcohol is served in any form, non-alcoholic alternatives should always be offered. Non-alcoholic beverages should 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. Champagne, wine, and canned or bottled beer are the only alcoholic beverages allowed.
- Although beverages and other foods containing alcohol may be offered, together with non-alcoholic alternatives, they should never be promoted in such a way as to imply that partaking of them is any kind of social requirement.
- Alcoholic beverages cannot be sold without a license; this is a violation of Mississippi state law.
- All other applicable federal, state, and local ordinances, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors, must be observed.
- Groups of people sponsoring the event should either be a church organization or a group of members of the church. Departure from these guidelines should be cleared through the appropriate authority. The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the Rector.
- Care must be taken to ensure that responsible persons 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 assume responsibility for providing alternative transportation for anyone whose driving might be impaired. Alcohol is not permitted on church property (including parking lot) during wedding rehearsals and weddings. The Clergy, Wardens, and Wedding Coordinator reserve the right to exclude from the wedding or wedding-related event any persons who appear to be intoxicated.
- At no time shall persons under the age of 21 years be allowed to possess, use, or serve alcoholic beverages of any kind on church property or at church functions other than during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
- It is the duty of the Clergy in charge of the congregation and the Wardens and Vestry to assume the responsibility for the dissemination and observance of these guidelines.
- Invitations to affairs held at church functions or on church property at which alcoholic beverages are to be offered should be issued only to the congregation, parish organizations, their guests and friends, and never to the general public.