

THE USE OF ALCOHOL AT CHURCH FUNCTIONS

The Episcopal Church has never taken a stance endorsing the prohibition of the use of beverages containing alcohol among her members. In fact, the Church's Teaching Series book, The Christian Moral Vision, states, "most Episcopalians have accepted wine as a gift of God, to be used with thanksgiving. The wine of the Eucharist serves as a symbol of God's blessing on the fruit of the vine." (p.71) Our Church, in accordance with its tradition of moderation and balance, recognizes that alcohol can be used wisely.

In the light of this position, the following guidelines are given for the serving and use of alcoholic beverages at church functions or on church property within the Diocese of East Carolina:

- (1) Alcohol is not appropriate to serve at **every** church-sponsored function, but if the congregational policy permits it to be served in any form, non-alcoholic alternatives must 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.
- (2) Any food or beverage that contains alcohol must be clearly labeled as such—this direction applies to any food (such as fruit compotes, desserts, etc.) where the alcohol has not been volatilized (i.e. "cooked out").
- (3) "The beverages and other foods containing alcohol may be offered 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. Promotion of parish events at which alcoholic beverages will be served should not include in the event's title specific reference to the alcoholic beverage (e.g., "Crab Feast" rather than Beer and Crab Supper").
- (4) All applicable Federal, State and Local laws and ordinances, including those governing the sale and serving of alcoholic beverages to minors, must be observed.
- (5) Care must be taken to insure that responsible persons are in control of the prudent serving and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Although drinking is acceptable, drunkenness is not.
- (6) It is the duty of the priest in charge of the congregation, the Senior Warden, and the Vestry to assume responsibility for the dissemination and observance of these guidelines.