

Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon Alcohol Policy

**45th Annual Diocesan Convention
The Dalles, Oregon – October 16-18, 2015**

Resolution title: “Alcohol affects us all.”

Submitted by: Diocesan Council & Resolutions Committee

Rationale:

The 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church held June 25 – July 3, 2015 at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, passed three resolutions on the issue of alcohol and substance abuse and recommends, a) acknowledging the church's role in the culture of alcohol and drug abuse; b) creating a task force to review and revise policy on substance abuse, addiction and recovery and c) recommending that ordinands be questioned at the very beginning of the discernment process about addiction and substance use in their lives and family systems.

Recognizing that the “Episcopal National Policy on Alcohol and Drug Abuse” adopted by the 68th General Convention at Anaheim, California in 1985, is in need of revision and updating, a committee was tasked with offering practical recommendations on addressing these issues in the church, as well as initiating a process of discussion of the “hidden problem” of addiction that affects many Episcopalians.

These efforts are hastened in response to the arrest of a suffragan bishop who struck and killed a cyclist while driving her car in an intoxicated state. The General Convention recommends that dioceses and congregations now ensure an update of their policies.

WHEREAS, the proper use of food and beverages containing alcohol reflects God's gifts; and the misuse of God's gifts detracts from the human capabilities of clear thinking and responsible action; and

WHEREAS, numerous individuals may be afflicted by intemperate or uncontrollable use of alcohol;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the following guidelines shall be the policy for the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon (EDEO) and congregations herein:

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1. EDEO must provide a safe and welcoming environment for all people, including people in recovery.
2. All applicable federal, state and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
3. EDEO and our congregations 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.
4. When alcohol is served, it must be monitored and those showing signs of intoxication must not be served. 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. If hard liquor is served, a certified server is required.
5. 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. The presence of minors at such events requires modeling of responsible use by adults as well as monitoring possible overuse and underage drinking.
6. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Food prepared with alcohol must be labeled.
7. Whenever alcohol is served, appealing non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal prominence and accessibility.
8. While alcoholic beverages available at church activities is allowed, emphasis should be given to the primary purpose\ activity of the event e.g., fellowship, fundraising, study. The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as the primary attraction of the event, e.g. “wine and cheese reception,” “cocktail party,” and “beer and wine tasting.”
9. Ministries inside or outside of congregations will make certain that alcohol consumption is not the focus of the ministry and that drinking alcohol is not an exclusively normative activity. Food must be served when alcohol is present.
10. The groups or organizations sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the clergy or the vestry. Such groups or organizations must also assume responsibility for those persons who might become intoxicated and must provide alternative transportation for anyone whose capacity to drive may be impaired. Consulting with liability insurance carriers is advised.
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. Clergy shall consecrate an appropriate amount of wine when celebrating the Eucharist and perform ablutions in a way that does not foster or model misuse. Clergy are encouraged to acknowledge the efficacy of receiving the sacrament in one kind and may consider providing non-alcoholic wine.
13. EDEO will review & implement recommendations from the House of Bishops regarding questioning ordinands at the very beginning of the discernment process about addiction and substance us in their lives and family systems. [Note: The bishops have created a task force to review and advise policy on substance abuse addiction and recovery.]

