

Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church

Alcohol Use Policy

Submitted to the Standing Committee

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1 Background

Recently the standing committee was asked to make a determination as to the appropriateness of the consumption of alcoholic beverages on the church premises. This is actually a complex problem dealing with moral, legal, and logistical issues. As a result, the standing committee commissioned this policy to be developed.

There have been many events in the past where alcohol was served. No one knows of any problems that have been caused because of alcohol at these events. It is important to recognize that this policy is preventative in nature.

2 About This Document

This is not a legal document and does not provide legal protection to the church in any way.

The purpose of the **Philosophy** section is to document the assumptions and goals of the policy. This section should be used, and have enough in it to address issues not specifically covered in the specific policy. The philosophy section is important because it allows for specific policy to change as appropriate yet still maintain integrity of values.

The **Policy** section is the specific guideline to be used that is in line with the philosophy. The effectiveness of the policy is limited by the willingness of the people to follow it. This concept, power from the consent of the governed, is the basis for all constitutional government. Every attempt must be made to make the policy clear, flexible, adaptable, and easy to use. It also must be influenced by those effected by it.

The **Review** section is a process to improve the policy as time passes. This is necessary to insure the policy is appropriate for the times or to improve other quality aspects of the process previously mentioned.

The **Issues** section is a critical analysis of the policy or of having any policy.

3 Philosophy

The central issues around alcohol at social events are:

- How to allow individual freedoms yet insure that they are governed by responsible behavior.
- How to have the church community model what we believe to be moral social behavior.

The first issue comes from our values of individuality and tolerance. We should not impose strict, rigid codes of behavior on our members. Yet we need to strike a balance when an individuals' behavior may hurt others. The goal of the policy is to manage this balance and prevent unsafe situations. We need to be prepared to act with decisiveness to insure the safety of all if the need arises.

The second issue stems from the role of the church community. The church community in its social events must model our moral values with our behavior. This way our children, and peers can learn by seeing their espoused values in action. In order to do this effectively, we can not and should not create an artificial environment for church events. This would be the case if we prohibited alcohol from social events. Alcohol and its use are part of the real world. Learning how to deal with it is central to the role of our church community.

4 Policy

4.1 Notice

It is important that notice be given that alcohol will be at an event. The purpose is to verify that the sponsors of the event are aware of and understand the policy. A phone call to the President, any Standing Committee member, or the Minister shall suffice. These shall be recorded at the time the event is scheduled.

4.2 Planning

The sponsor of the event will plan the logistics according to the following guidelines:

The Event:

- This policy applies to all events sponsored by the church as well as non-church sponsored
- events held on the church premises
- All alcoholic beverages must be located at one clearly identified place
- There must be non-alcoholic beverages available and clearly marked
- Alcoholic beverages brought by individuals shall be placed and treated as all others
- Alcoholic beverages shall stop being served at least 45 minutes before the end of the event

The Server:

- The Server is the only one distributing drinks
- The Server must not drink alcoholic beverages
- The Server and those served must be above the legal drinking age
- No person shall be served if they appear to be intoxicated

The Monitor:

- The Monitor is a church member
- There shall be 1 monitor for every 50 people at the event
- The Monitor shall keep order with great discretion
- The Monitor shall arrange rides as needed

The Sponsor:

- The Sponsor will indicate the intent to have alcoholic drinks present at the event when the event is advertised
- The Sponsor is responsible to ensure that the Server and Monitor(s) understand their roles and read this guideline
- The Sponsor will have her/his plan finalized no later than 14 days prior to the event
- The Sponsor will notify the Standing Committee of his/her plans in writing.

5 Review

In the first year of this policy, these guidelines will be reviewed every time they are used. A Standing Committee member will be assigned to solicit feedback from those affected by this policy. They will present the feedback and recommended amendments to the policy at the Standing Committee meeting following the event. The Standing Committee will then vote as to amend the policy.

The policy should stabilize as it matures. This may lessen the need to review it so frequently.

6 Issues

- Should we get a legal review ? What are the liability issues ?
- Philosophy section is weak, I bet David U. could do better.
- I don't like the tone of the word "Monitor" but didn't want to use "Bouncer". Any suggestions ?
- Should we build signs, check lists, forms to make the use of this policy easier ? If so, then who ?
- Who will this offend ?