

Policy for Use of Church Buildings by Outside Groups

It is common for church buildings to be used by outside groups for a variety of purposes including Scouting and Guiding groups, Twelve Step programs and other support groups, musical groups and social gatherings. This is particularly true in communities where the church hall may be the only building large enough to host a community gathering. It is important that outside users do not bring discredit to the Church and that our buildings are not used in any way that is contrary to our witness and faith.

All users shall sign an agreement for use that addresses, but is not limited to, the items listed below. Examples of agreements for both single use and on-going use are available from the Secretary Treasurer of the Diocese. All long term user agreements must be approved by the Diocesan Secretary Treasurer who will consult with the Chancellor as necessary.

Area for use: The area that is being used, including any storage provided, should be clearly outlined.

Timing of use: As well as clearly stating the usual times of use, there should be provision for canceling, rescheduling or moving the space used by the user in case of funerals or other sudden need by the parish.

Insurance: All users must purchase external group insurance which is made available through the diocesan insurance broker or provide proof of equivalent insurance coverage to ensure that adequate protection is provided for the church.

Safe Church: Users must be familiar with and agree to abide by the Diocesan Safe Church Policy or provide proof of an equivalent group policy.

Cost: The agreement should outline the cost (if any) to the user and the method and timing of payments as well as any penalties should payment be missed.

Permitted Uses: The agreement should outline the permitted uses of the space. If there are any concerns, then it may be helpful to outline as well non-permitted uses.

Keys: No interior or exterior keys should be made by the user without the express, written consent of the wardens.

Contact persons: Both the church and the user group should designate contact persons and ensure that this list is regularly updated. The user group should also provide to the church a list of the person(s) who hold the keys, if applicable.

Use of the Church Proper (Nave, Chancel, Sanctuary)

It is extremely important that any use of the church proper befit the fact that it is a sacred and holy place. The rector of a parish must give his/her permission for the use of the church proper and it is his/her responsibility to ensure that a use is appropriate. Users must be made aware of the proper treatment of sacred furnishings such as altars and fonts in our churches and agree to honour our traditions. Any such on-going use must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop before any agreement can be made.