

Recovery Ministries of the Diocese of New Jersey Report to the 223rd Diocesan Convention

Over the past year a number of significant goals have been achieved. First and foremost was the creation and distribution of a diocesan policy on the use of alcohol within our congregations. We are indebted to Bishop Councell for his leadership in initiating this effort. We are likewise most grateful to our Diocesan Council for their unanimous endorsement. Please know that the role of our committee is not to serve as some kind of policy policing agency. We seek only to nurture a healthier environment for all while addressing the very real vulnerabilities of those affected by the disease of alcoholism and other drug dependency in a spirit of love and pastoral response. A copy of our policy is attached at the end of our report for your referral.

A much smaller goal has been the renaming of our committee. Since we began, the most frequent question we received was "What is your name?" We began as the Diocese of New Jersey Alcohol and Drug Dependency and Recovery Committee. Lacking a memorable acronym (What do you do with DNJADDRC?), we have simply become Recovery Ministries of the Diocese of New Jersey. We continue to focus on dependency and recovery relative to alcohol and other drugs. The difference is that we hope you might better remember our name.

Our involvement in these areas has connected us with a much greater network of Episcopalians who share our work. We were pleased to have two of our members represent us last spring at the national gathering of Episcopal Recovery Ministries. The ability to find solidarity with other clergy and lay colleagues in recovery ministries has been most helpful. The exchange of experience and ideas that takes place in such a setting is uniquely valuable.

We once again benefited from two retreats designed to give us the chance to examine our work as a committee more deeply. Among the topics we have begun to explore are ways in which we can be more helpful advocates for timely intervention, the use of alcoholic and non-alcoholic wine at communion and the celebration of a diocesan recovery day. At our 2007 convention you will see one fruit of such discussion as we display and award a number of alternative baskets of cheer. We are also grateful for the opportunity to once again offer an open 12-step meeting for any and all in recovery during the hospitality hour preceding our convention banquet.

As always, we are pleased to provide information, prayer and referral for any congregation or individual within our diocese seeking to address issues of dependency and recovery. Feel free to call on any of us listed below:

The Reverend Cathy Brunson, Dcn.
(732) 271-3933
cathy.brunson@verizonbusiness.com

Ms. Lynn Muller, MSW, LCSW
(609) 953-1969
lynnmuller@verizon.net

The Reverend Mary Ann Jensen, Dcn.
(609) 921-0756
majensen@newjersey.anglican.org

The Reverend Mark Van Sant
(732) 741-7826
saintjohnschurch@earthlink.net

Judy Krom, PhD
(732) 262-8072
jsk13@comcast.net

The Reverend Joan Watson, MSW, ACS
(856) 596-8605
revjoanwatson@comcast.net

Mr. Bob Lowry
(732) 571-3183
Robert.Lowry@usma.edu

Ms. Kay Worrell
(732) 774-0716
kayworr@aol.com

In Christ's Healing Love,

The Rev. Mark Van Sant, Chairman
Recovery Ministries Committee

Diocese of New Jersey Policy on Alcohol Use at Church Functions

Alcohol should not be served prior to worship or business meetings.

All beverages and food containing alcohol must be clearly and distinctly labeled.

This guideline is most often forgotten where food is concerned. It must be remembered that the flavor of liquor (in food where the alcohol has been cooked out) is something that many persons in recovery wish to avoid.

Food must be available at all functions where alcohol is served.

Equally attractive, non-alcoholic alternatives must be offered as conspicuously as alcoholic beverages.

Persons who wish to abstain from alcohol must be able to do so comfortably. It is critical that alternatives to alcoholic beverages be of equal quality as those containing alcohol. It is inappropriate to serve a good bottle of wine in a crystal glass when the only alternative is a can of pop in the back of the refrigerator (or a pot of coffee on the stove) with nothing to drink from but a paper cup.

The promotion of church functions must not use alcohol as an enticement to participation.

No announcements, advertisements or promotional material should imply that drinking alcohol is a social requirement.

Alcoholic beverages should not be a part of the identification of church events—e.g. “Bratwurst Festival” not “Beer and Bratwurst;” “Reception with Hors d’oeuvres,” or “Reception with Light Refreshments,” not “Wine and Cheese Reception”.

Alcohol should not be served in such a way as to teach children that growing up necessarily implies alcohol consumption.

All federal, state and local laws and ordinances must be observed.

This includes regulations requiring licenses for the sale of alcohol, prohibiting the distribution of alcohol to minors, and serving alcohol to intoxicated persons. Serving alcoholic beverages entails incurring moral as well as potential legal and financial liability for those who become intoxicated. It is expected that responsibility will be taken for the safety of persons who become intoxicated at church functions (up to and including transportation for those whose driving might be impaired).