

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 8, 2021
TO: The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely
FROM: Richard Sayer, Chancellor
SUBJECT: Use of Parish Facilities for Periodic Activities by Outside Groups

I have been asked to review the use of parish facilities by outside groups not affiliated with the parish. Small outside groups, such as bridge clubs, knitting groups or Alcoholics Anonymous, frequently request the use of parish facilities for meetings on a regular basis. Because these groups are small and informal, they lack any legal structure and the ability to provide liability insurance to the parish covering their use.

After consultation with Church Insurance the following guidelines are recommended to properly protect any such parish.

- Any such groups must seek permission, in writing, from the vestry or the rector, describing the purpose of the group and its use of the parish facilities, including the days and times of use.
- At a regular vestry meeting, the group's request should be included on the written agenda for the meeting and received into the records of the meeting. In order for the parish's insurance to cover the group, the group must be formally recognized as a "ministry" of the parish by a resolution of the vestry which must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- Any group designated as a "ministry" of the parish will be covered under the parish's insurance.
- Safe Church requirements of the Episcopal Church as affirmed by General Convention and this Diocese prohibit unfettered and unsupervised access to church facilities by such outside groups, which means, no keys or access codes may be given out indiscriminately.
- The Safe Church requirements specifies that the outside group be welcomed by a "Building Host", who may be a staff member or a volunteer from the congregation.
- The Building Host must open the facility for the group, remain onsite during the meeting and lock the building following the departure of the group. The Building Host may be a member of the group as long as the "Building Host" is a staff member or a volunteer from the congregation who has completed Safe Church training.