

## RPC Policy Consideration: Allowing Alcohol for Specific Events on Campus

At its meeting on 10/20, the Session will be voting on whether to allow alcoholic beverages on campus in limited circumstances. **All members are encouraged to review the proposed policy by clicking [here](#). Member feedback is appreciated and can be sent** to Pastor Brian Lays ([brian.lays@rpcjax.org](mailto:brian.lays@rpcjax.org)); Jim Riley, Elder, ([jriley@rtlaw.com](mailto:jriley@rtlaw.com)); and/or Kathy Para, Elder ([parakathy@gmail.com](mailto:parakathy@gmail.com)). If you'd rather talk in person please provide that feedback, as well so we can have a conversation!

In 1986, the General Assembly (GA) of the Presbyterian Church USA published a comprehensive report on alcohol use and abuse. It was reprinted most recently in 1995. The relevant recommendations for our purpose at present are on pages 38-40, in particular page 40. It begins: "A majority of Presbyterians do use alcohol in their personal lives, and the General Assembly affirms the right of individuals in conscience to make responsible choices between abstention and moderate non-problematic use. Each governing body and agency of the church and institutions related to the church should also make conscious decisions regarding the responsible use and nonuse of alcohol at meetings and other formal and informal functions falling within its jurisdiction." The study then recommends some policy guidelines.

The St. Augustine Presbytery does not have rules for or against the use of alcohol on church property. It's up to the individual Sessions to design its church's policy.

From time to time at RPC and RPDS, there have been occasions when a group would like to serve alcohol on the church grounds under certain limited conditions; for instance, during a wedding reception held at the church, or at a fundraiser organized by the day school. In response to these requests, a subcommittee of the Session was tasked with researching how other churches have addressed this issue. We found that a number of churches do indeed allow alcohol to be served on church grounds as long as the organization requesting such use has a licensed and insured caterer in charge of the alcohol and so long as the requesting organization and the caterer abide by a number of strict rules. Under no circumstances would the church itself be in a position of serving alcohol. Some additional key requirements include:

- Beer, wine, and champagne only may be served by the licensed and insured caterer.
- No alcohol will be stored on the campus overnight.
- The church and day school will not charge a fee for the beverages.

The Session has prepared a draft policy on the serving of alcohol. We encourage you to review the policy, and if you have any questions, please email Brian Lays ([brian.lays@rpcjax.org](mailto:brian.lays@rpcjax.org)), Jim Riley ([jriley@rtlaw.com](mailto:jriley@rtlaw.com)), or Kathy Para ([parakathy@gmail.com](mailto:parakathy@gmail.com)) with your thoughts and comments. These will be shared with the full Session prior to the Session meeting on October 20th and, at your request, will be shared anonymously. The Session will vote on whether to adopt the policy at its October meeting.