

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Facility Use Policy

Guidelines for church use at non-church events

January 2022

Policy

The Executive Committee¹ of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church must approve all use of church property applications with a simple majority vote prior to any use occurring. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church of Lakewood, WA (POP), believes that its property is to be used for the fellowship in the Body of Christ and to bring glory to God. Although church property is not generally available for public use; the church recognizes that use of its property for non-church events, could extend its mission, and benefit the community and neighbors. Any such use must remain consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Facility use will not be allowed by persons or groups holding, advocating or advancing beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings; as summarized in the church's constitution and bylaws. These moral teachings can be reviewed at the church's website <https://www.poplakewood.org/church-documents> and on the website of the Lutheran Church-- Missouri Synod, <https://www.lcms.org/about/beliefs/doctrine>.

We believe that allowing our property, facilities and/or equipment to be used for purposes contrary to our published church's beliefs constitutes an endorsement of those purposes and therefore a contradiction and grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice (2 Cor. 6:14, 1 Thes. 5:21-22)². We believe the church must present a consistent message to the community, the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their Christian life and as a witness to others that it is consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, under no circumstance shall persons or groups holding, advancing, advocating or engaging in practices that contradict the church's faith may use any of our church property, facilities and/or equipment. Nor may they use the church's facilities in any other way that contradicts the church's faith. This policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of connection to the church's sanctuary, because it is our belief that all church property is a gift of God to be received with thanksgiving and to be set apart and used to the honor of Jesus' name in ways that are consistent with our faith in Him (Col 3:17). Consistent with this policy, church property, facilities and/or equipment may be made available to non-members or outside groups which affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned use of the facilities are consistent with the church's faith and practice.

This policy provides consistent requirements for use of POP property. This will allow people associated with POP and organizations not otherwise associated with POP to use POP facilities and equipment, where such use remains in the interest of POP. Any group not of or sponsored by POP must accept the terms of this policy and its guidelines. Anyone using POP facilities must accept the terms of use specified. Except where specified, non-church groups and individuals must complete an application, which must be approved as stated above prior to use.

¹ President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer

² Allowed accordance with RCW 26.04.020(5)-(6)

Terms

‘POP’ and the ‘church’ means the congregation of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church of Lakewood, WA

‘Non-church group’ means any group or individual not of POP

‘Single event’ means an event not repeated within a year and not expected to be recurring.

‘Recurring use’ means use regularly scheduled activities more than once a year.

‘Co-use’ refers to a renewable for joint use of POP grounds, facilities and equipment between POP and another group, for the purpose of Christian worship.

‘Adult’ a person 18 years or older³.

General guidelines

The Executive Committee of POP reserves the right under Washington law⁴ to accept, deny or cancel requests for use of facilities and to modify established agreements in accordance with the best interests of POP; regarding property management, church activities and compliance with government regulations.

Subsequent approval for use of POP property for events requires satisfactory compliance with these guidelines from prior events. Compliance failure may result in declination of further or future use.

Building opening and closing will be performed only by a POP member or other person as instructed by the Board of Trustees⁵. The building must be locked and the security alarm set when closing the building. This responsibility may not pass to any other person without express written permission of the Executive Committee of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

Use of facilities is subject to a cleaning/utility fee⁶ to cover church upkeep and direct expenses. Because church members’ use tithes and offerings for church maintenance, church members have no requirement to pay a cleaning/utility fee directly related to fellowship (such as but not limited to birthday parties, anniversary celebrations etc.). This accommodation is not to be used by groups to bypass the normal application process and cleaning/utility fee.

Approved requests by the Executive Committee will be processed through the church office, first-come first-served; then recorded on the church calendar. Until deposits and fees are fully paid, the scheduled event will be considered tentative and may be superseded. Regularly scheduled POP events and services shall have priority over all other events.

Any deposits and/or fees due to POP must be paid at least 3 business days prior to use of church facilities or equipment. Exceptions to this time line, may be made where use is recurring and prior arrangement has been reached between POP Executive Committee and the non-church group. Payments may be by check or cash; checks made out to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Nonsufficient funds check fees will be charged back to the check writer and will subsequently require cash payment before the event may proceed.

³ RCW 26.28.010 - age of eighteen years

⁴ RCW 24.12.010, RCW 26.04.010 (4)-(6), RCW 26.04.020(5)-(6), RCW 84.36.020, WAC 458-16-190

⁵ Chairman of the trustees or their designated representative.

⁶ WAC 458-16-190 (7), RCW 84.36.020 (2)(b)

The church has no responsibility for theft or damage to personal property anywhere on the church campus or in the buildings.

Permission to use church facilities or equipment does not include liability on the part of the church for property damage or personal injury resulting from user-group activities. These liabilities go directly to the person or group permitted to use these facilities.

Adult⁷ supervision of any minors⁸ is required during the entire period of use of church facilities.

The non-church group will not bring or allow dangerous items into the facility (weapons, fireworks, explosives, etc.). Before bringing items of potential danger inquire with the Executive Committee about their use.

Smoking Policy: Smoking and/or vaping is prohibited in the building and within twenty-five feet of the entrance⁹ as per state law. Use of marijuana and its derivatives is prohibited on church property, regardless of the acquisition of a banquet permit.

Alcohol Policy: Alcoholic beverages will not be served at any event in church facilities without the specific permission of the Executive Committee. Alcohol may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. Also, a banquet permit is required when alcohol is available. Under aged¹⁰ event attendees will not be served alcohol. Alcohol cannot be left open or served in or on church property without adult supervision. The event coordinator shall acknowledge and take responsibility for those served alcohol and shall remain responsible should guests become intoxicated. An additional purchase of insurance will be required and you or your group are responsible for any and all damages to church property or other than church property should you or a guest cause damages, become injured, or injure a third-party. A banquet/liquor permit will be required.

Behavior on church property policy: Abusive or foul language, violent and anti-social behavior, and drug or alcohol abuse are strictly prohibited on church premises. Any person exhibiting such behavior will be required to leave the premises and not return.

Food and beverages will generally be restricted to the kitchen and fellowship hall. Serving food and beverages must be specifically approved and will require a written plan and agreement for handling and for clean-up. The kitchen is a warming kitchen. All food is to be prepared off site and brought in or catered.

Only facilities and equipment approved for use will be used.

Furniture set up (coming and going) is generally the responsibility of the using group. Furniture and equipment will be returned to its original placement, unless some other arrangement has been made prior to the event.

⁷ RCW 26.28.010 - age of eighteen years

⁸ WAC 296-128-400 (2)(a) - a person under eighteen years

⁹ RCW 70.160.075

¹⁰ RCW 66.44.270 (2)(a) – under twenty-one years

The sanctuary is our place of worship; speech and conduct must reflect this. No food or beverages in the sanctuary, except for feeding infants. Use of the sanctuary will generally be restricted to worship, wedding services and funeral services. Rearrangement in the sanctuary must have approval by the Board of Trustees and the Alter Guild prior to any event. Only the Trustees may move sanitary items. The communion table (altar) will only be used for its traditional purposes; prayer and the Eucharist. The kneeling rails, crucifer, or alter candles may not be used for any purpose other than their traditional purposes.

Without exception, use of the sound systems and lighting equipment must be performed by or under the supervision of a persons trained and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Candles are permitted for ceremonial use only. If used, candles must be drip-less and used with a holder. The use of candles requires preapproval by the Board of Trustees.

Decorations must be used and placed in ways that do not alter or damage the property. Without exception, permanent changes must have prior approval of the Board of Trustees. Live floral arrangements are the only decoration approved for use in the sanctuary. Any other article must have prior approval by the altar guild. All decorations used for the event will be removed as a part of clean up.

Without exception, minors on church property must be under adult supervision all times.

Clean up is the responsibility of the user-group. Contact information for clean-up must be given to the church. Facilities must be left free of trash, neat and clean. Mop, bucket and vacuum cleaner are kept in the water closet of the fellowship hall. Brooms, towels and sponges are kept in the kitchen. Furniture must be reset to their original position. Dishes and pans will be washed, sanitized and put away. Trash must be collected and removed from church property. No trash may be placed in the church refuse containers.

When all conditions have been met, deposits will be returned within 10 days by US Postal Service.

Scheduled Church Events

Scheduled church events do not fall under this policy. Weddings and funerals have separate guidelines and applications but will refer back to these general guidelines and policies.

POP members and POP member sponsored usage guidelines

Application for church use is not required for regularly scheduled events. There is a separate request form for POP members to request personal use of the church facilities.

We must handle childcare requests for worship services, e.g., funerals and weddings on a case-by-case basis depending on the availability of a properly certified caregiver.

Failure to comply with the facility use policy can result in future use requests disapproved.

Non-church individual usage

During the weekly food closet, it is permissible for an agent of a commercial or benevolent organization to set up in the narthex, for the purpose of informing food closet clients of material benefits, which could be made available to them. Those agents should be familiar with this policy and its general guidelines but do not need a formal use request. Any and all agents must however, receive verbal approval from the Executive Committee or its designee before setting up.

Non-church group usage

All non-church groups and persons must sign an agreement with POP, prior to use of POP campus, facility, and/or facility contents. The agreement acknowledges the group's intent to abide by this policy and accept responsibility for damages to the campus, facility and/or facility content.

Insurance: For all non-church group events, the group or person using the facilities must obtain liability insurance coverage in amount of at least **\$1,000,000**. The user must also sign a "Facility Use and an Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement." Unless specific written exception has been made by the POP Executive Committee, non-church groups using church property may not charge a fee, receive monetary remuneration for services rendered on church property or fund raising, except to defray: church use fees and donations, instructional expenses, organizational dues or assessments to meet group operation expenses.

Co-use agreements are required, where the non-church group intends to use the church facilities for worship and other activities. Long-term use agreements expire yearly unless an alternate written approval has been agreed to by the Executive Committee.