

# Vineyard Church of Ithaca

## Building Use Policy

### **Purpose Statement**

The church's facilities were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of church members. The church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

But facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church's constitution and bylaws. Nor may church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church's faith or moral teachings. The pastor, or his official designee, is the final decision-maker concerning use of church facilities.

This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, the church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the church's beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice. (2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Second, it is very important that the church present a consistent message to the community, and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the church's faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the church strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, the church agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.

Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict the church's faith use any church facility. Nor may church facilities be used in any way that contradicts the church's faith. This policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church's sanctuary, because the church sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God. (Colossians 3:17)

### **Approved Users and Priority of Use**

The pastor or official designee must approve all uses of the church facilities. Generally, priority shall be given to church members, their immediate families, and organized groups that are part of the ministry, organization, or sponsored activities of the church. Church facilities and equipment will be made available to non-members or outside groups meeting the following qualifications:

1. Groups or persons requesting facility use must affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the facilities are consistent with the church's faith and practice.
2. The group or person seeking facility use must submit a signed "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form.
3. The group or person seeking facility use must be willing to take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and must agree to abide by the church's rules of conduct for facility use, as stated below and as described in any additional instructions by church staff.

### **Facility Use Hours**

Facilities are available between the hours of 8:00 am and 11:00 pm. Use outside these hours may be approved by the pastor or official designee.

### **Scheduling Events**

Facility use requests shall be made to the Administrative Assistant by submitting the "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form. The event will be reserved and placed on the church calendar only when the pastor or official designee approves the use.

### **Fees**

Use of church facilities is subject to a Use and Maintenance Fee each time the facilities are used. Fees are charged based on the following schedule. An extra maintenance fee may be issued if the church is not left in good condition.

- \$50.00 Outside groups
- \$25.00 Associated organizations
- \$ 1.00 Church attendees

### **Facility Use Guidelines**

1. Alcohol Policy: Alcohol in church facilities is prohibited.
2. Smoking Policy: Smoking in any indoor church facilities is prohibited. Any outdoor smoking must follow New York State guidelines concerning public facilities.
3. Groups are restricted to only those areas of the facility that the group has reserved.
4. Food and beverages may be used in the church. Cleanup is required, including any spills or stains. If cleanup is not possible, an additional maintenance fee may be assessed.

5. Church equipment, such as tables, chairs, and audio/visual equipment, must be returned to original placement, unless arranged otherwise prior to the event.
6. All lights must be turned off and doors locked upon departure. (Keys are distributed by the pastor or official designee.)
7. Abusive or foul language, violent behavior, and drug or alcohol abuse are strictly prohibited on church premises. Any person exhibiting such behavior will be required to leave the premises.
8. Any person or group must sign the “Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement” form prior to reservation of church facilities.

**Insurance**

For all non-church-sponsored events, the group or person using the facilities must provide proof of insurance. The user must also sign a “Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement”.