

Policy for Church Facilities Use by Community

Adopted by Church Council: March 2018

APPLICATION

Review Church Policies section at the end of this application prior to beginning this application. Additional Policies or Guidelines may also apply. This policy applies to all groups approved to use St Mark Lutheran Church (SMLC) Facilities for any community activity outside the mission of the Church, even if a participant or leader in their group is a member of SMLC.

BACKGROUND

St. Mark Lutheran Church's primary purpose is to carry on the mission and ministry of the congregation. The congregation is happy to share our facilities (building and grounds here-in referred to as FACILITIES) as we desire to support outreach to the community. To assist with the management of the FACILITIES we require that you (and your group) read and adhere to this policy and that you (or your group representative) sign and return the Application/Hold Harmless Agreement for Church Facilities Community Use.

Church Mission Statement

St. Mark Lutheran Church, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone, is a people called by God to be servants of all people; to experience God's saving grace through faith; to come together as the body of Christ in worship and celebration of the gifts of God; and to reach out to those outside the church with witness to the loving grace of God through Christ Jesus. To answer this call, our mission will include reaching out to and beyond the members of St. Mark.

Reconciling in Christ (RIC)

St. Mark Lutheran Church affirms the boundless love of God for all of God's children. All people are welcome to worship with us, to join our congregation, to participate in the mission and ministry to which God is calling us in our community, and to all aspects of our life together. As a Reconciling in Christ congregation we publicly welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. For more information on Reconciling in Christ: <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/about/>

Our FACILITIES may be used by local non-profit organizations, by support groups, and by individuals (herein all referred to as COMMUNITY USERS) for one-time or short-term usage at the discretion of the Church. The availability of FACILITIES for COMMUNITY USERS is subject to congregation programs and member needs that are scheduled through the Church office and normally documented on our master calendar. Priority is then given to Church supported COMMUNITY USERS followed by new outreach opportunities. To be considered for inclusion in FACILITIES usage the COMMUNITY USER must be approved in writing by the Church as covered below

PROCESS

FACILITIES use falls under the jurisdiction of the Property Committee. Requests for FACILITIES use are managed through the Church Office. No commitment for use is finalized until the Use Application/Hold Harmless Agreement for Church Facilities Community Use has been signed by COMMUNITY USERS' representative and approved through the Church Office. This approval process may take up to two weeks. Church FACILITIES use is at the sole discretion of SMLC and SMLC reserves the right to terminate any existing approved agreement. Temporary suspension examples include occasions when higher priority events are added to the Church master schedule (e.g. weddings, funerals, etc.) by the Church Office that conflict with existing COMMUNITY USER schedules. Permanent termination examples include permanent conflicts and failure of COMMUNITY USER to adhere to this policy. Temporary suspension of an agreement will be by phone or writing through the Church Office while all permanent terminations of existing agreements will be in writing through the Church Office.

Approval for the use of the FACILITIES does not constitute or imply endorsement of a COMMUNITY USER, their mission, or their positions. COMMUNITY USERS approved to use FACILITIES shall not advertise the event in such a way as to imply endorsement by the congregation. At its sole discretion, SMLC may judge Activities or advocacy in conflict with the practices or beliefs of the Church or the ELCA as grounds for disapproval of a request or termination of an existing agreement.

FEES FOR FACILITY USAGE

At this time, the congregation does not charge a fee for the use of our facilities. Donations are always welcome and when received are normally used to help offset cost of utilities and cleaning. A deposit may be required for one-time, larger events.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. **CHURCH PROPERTY:** Church property will not be loaned, borrowed, or removed from church premises without prior permission from the church office.
2. **FACILITY CARE:** The church area used by your group must be left clean and orderly with church furniture and property returned to its designated place.
3. **KITCHEN RULES:** The kitchen must be left clean and orderly after use. Garbage and trash must be bagged and disposed in the dumpster behind the church. Church supplies are not to be used except by church-sponsored activities.
4. **PIANO AND ORGAN USE:** Permission to use the piano and/or organ must be granted by the Pastor or Director of Music. Piano and/or organ should not be moved except by permission from the Director of Music.
5. **NO SMOKING and NO ALCOHOL USE ALLOWED:** All members of all groups using our facilities shall abide at all times by a “no smoking” rule in all parts of the building, including corridors and restrooms. The covered outside walk on the side entrance (by the elevator) may be used for smoking on the outside grounds if required. Alcohol use is prohibited at the FACILITIES.
6. **BUILDING USE:** All groups agree that they will ensure that all event participants leave the building after the event. They will be responsible for turning off all lights and closing all windows.
7. **NO GAMES OF CHANCE:** Gambling and bingo on the church premises involving money are prohibited.
8. **NO FOR PROFIT ACTIVITIES:** No for profit activities are allowed.
9. **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH:** The congregation seeks to provide a safe environment for children and youth. All users of the facilities are expected to be familiar with and are expected to follow the core principals of CPP - namely that no non-parent/guardian shall be alone with a minor; any and all incidents where there is reasonable suspicion of a minor being physically or sexually endangered shall be reported. See the Church Office for a copy of the CPP and to answer any questions related to your request and planned activities.
10. **FOOD AND DRINK:** Food and drink should be limited to the narthex, student room, youth room, parish hall or outside. Anyone using the church property is responsible for cleaning up after each use, both inside and outside. If a private catering service is used for the event, the caterer must furnish all supplies and equipment (e.g. dishes, silver, tablecloths, etc.) and remove these items immediately after the event. Storing of catering equipment is not permitted.
11. **DECORATIONS:** Decorations may be attached to the walls or doors with removable tape that will not permanently damage the surface. All such decorations must be removed immediately and completely following the event.
12. **EMERGENCY SCHEDULING CONFLICTS:** While rare, the congregation reserves the right to preempt any facility use for its own in cases of emergencies, such as funerals. Notice will be provided as early as possible.
13. **STORAGE:** Storage is limited for organizations other than church groups; as such, all organizations using the facility will be responsible for storing accessories offsite unless prior arrangements have been made through the church office.

14. **BREAKAGE:** All persons and/or groups using our facilities are expected to exercise reasonable care and judgment in such use in order to prevent defacement, damage or breakage. The Responsible Representative for the Community User shall be responsible for paying costs incurred by the church in cleaning or repairing any part of the building and/or its furnishings and equipment which in the judgment of the Mission Council or their delegated representative has been carelessly or irresponsibly subjected to more than normal wear and tear by the person(s) or group(s) involved.
15. **SECURITY:** The congregation works to maintain a safe and secure environment within the facility; however, no systems are foolproof. We ask that all users pay close attention to personal property and valuables, not leaving them unattended. The congregation is not responsible for theft or damage to personal property.

FINAL DECISIONS: In case of doubt or uncertainty by any outside person or group about the application or interpretation of these regulations, or in the customary practices not specifically mentioned here, the Mission Council or their delegated representative shall decide the matter and all individuals and groups shall abide by the Mission Council's directions or forfeit the use of any part of the facility immediately. The Mission Council, or its representative, has the right to remove access if those using the building are not abiding by the policy.