



St. John's Episcopal Church

524 Washington • Grand Haven, MI • 616.842.6260 • stjohsepiscopal.com

2016 Vestry Policy for Political Engagement

| | |
|------------------|---|
| <i>Celebrant</i> | Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? |
| <i>People</i> | I will, with God's help. |
| <i>Celebrant</i> | Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? |
| <i>People</i> | I will, with God's help. |

~ *The Baptismal Covenant*, BCP 293

We recognize that world problems significantly affect our lives both in and out of the church, and that we live in a free and open society where some of our most cherished privileges are the right to free speech and to vote. We affirm the call of the Baptismal Covenant to “strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.” We also recognize and embrace the diversity of people and of opinions that reside at St John's when it comes to how exactly we should put our God-given call for justice and peace into action. In order to serve Christ in all persons and love our neighbors as ourselves, we believe it is important to keep worship and partisan politics separate.

Therefore, the Vestry of St John's establishes the following policy with regard to political issues and their support by church members on church property:

- Non-partisan materials may be posted on the bulletin board marked as “Community Information.” Explicitly religious materials which might have political implications may be posted elsewhere, so long as they are approved by the Rector and both Wardens. However, because political questions are best engaged face to face, any other flyers or descriptive political materials may not be posted on church property—including, but not limited to, being placed on the church doors, information table, other bulletin boards, or the tract rack. No one may stand at the exit of our worship space or the entrance of the parish hall for the purpose of obtaining petition signatures or distributing political literature.
- Any person wishing to obtain signatures on a petition, invite people to a non-partisan political gathering, or recruit volunteers for calls to action may request a table at the back of the parish hall and must stay seated there so that interested members of the congregation may approach at their own discretion. Articles may also be submitted to the E-Newsletter and Parish Page, at the discretion and with the approval of the Rector.
- All such requests and submissions must be approved in advance by the Vestry. Approved requests may be announced briefly by the Celebrant; individuals will not be allowed time during worship services to make their own announcements. In order to be approved, the attached form shall be presented indicating how the request flows from our Baptismal Covenant. Particular attention should be granted to requests related the Episcopal Public Policy Network, since those calls flow from the mind of our church as expressed by General Convention.

The Vestry expresses its support for voter education initiatives during Faith Formation Hours or at other times, so long as those forums are carried out in a non-partisan manner that does not favor (or oppose) one or more candidates. Equal time shall be given to all sides of a question. These forums are left to the discretion of the Rector.

Worship God. Be Transformed in Christ. Change the World.

St. John's is a diverse Christian community, following Jesus' teaching through liturgical worship, transformation in the mind of Christ, and the pursuit of reconciliation and justice in God's creation.



St. John's Episcopal Church

524 Washington • Grand Haven, MI • 616.842.6260 • stjohsepiscopal.com

Application for Political Engagement on Church Property

“Almighty God, who created us in your own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.” ~ BCP 260

Your Name: _____

Date of Request: _____

What is the nature of your request?

- Post religious materials with political implications
- Post non-partisan materials on member bulletin board
- Collect signatures for a non-partisan petition
- Invite to a non-partisan gathering
- Recruit volunteers for specific action
- Other

Please briefly summarize and explain what you would like to do.

Please articulate how this request is related to the Baptismal Covenant (BCP 292-294). You may attach an additional sheets of paper, if necessary, to provide this explanation.

Is this request related to an action call identified by General Convention or the Episcopal Public Policy Network? Yes No

If yes, please give information on where the call for action came from and can be found.

For office use only. • Request approved by the Vestry and affirmed by:

| | | | |
|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Senior Warden | Date | Junior Warden | Date |
| _____ | | _____ | |
| Rector | | Date | |

Worship God. Be Transformed in Christ. Change the World.

St. John's is a diverse Christian community, following Jesus' teaching through liturgical worship, transformation in the mind of Christ, and the pursuit of reconciliation and justice in God's creation.