

St. Thomas Hall Policy: Going forward from October 2018

Contrary to some rumors going around the town, we as a Parish have no plans to sell the Church hall (former school) building in the foreseeable future. In light of that, I as Pastor, in consultation with the Parish council, wanted to come up with a reasonable policy for the Hall, especially in light of the reality of constant litigation in our society, over any number of issues, and that the Catholic Church is a particular target right now in that regard. It's a different world than 50, 25 or even 10 years ago when you could allow people to use your Hall basically without the fear of litigation if something unexpected happened. Sadly, those days are over.

Our Church hall building is not a community center, nor designated as such for tax, legal or practical purposes, but is a property fully belonging to St. Thomas Parish. In light of that reality, we have to be prudent in our stewardship of the Parish's resources and property for the good of all, long term. After discussing all this with Parish council this is the St. Thomas Church Hall Policy going forward.

The Hall building will be used for CCD and funeral luncheons and Parish events and Parish groups; and any events will be run by Parishioners and Parish groups, and any fundraisers will be solely for the Church and official Parish groups.

The stage is off limits for all events because of Mass being held there on Christmas and Easter, and so it is a sacred space.

There will be no renting or use by outside groups or persons because of liability and insurance issues . The community at large is always welcome to come to our Parish events, and we are grateful when they do come and support our events which are run by the Parish.

This policy will be fully implemented later this Fall after a few previously scheduled events are completed, which are holdovers from when the school was still operating.

Finally we as a Parish no longer have a liquor license for special events, so no alcohol will be allowed in the Church hall building moving forward, for the good of all involved, because if someone is drinking alcohol in our Hall at an event and then goes out and drives and gets pulled over or has an accident and God forbid someone dies or is seriously hurt, the injured party can come back on us as a Church. It's not worth the risk in this day and age, and we are acting now before something unfortunate happens.

Thank you for your ongoing support of St. Thomas Parish as we move forward in God's grace.