

The Church of the Redeemer
Accessibility Policy Statement
Providing Programs, Goods, and Services to People with Disabilities

A. Introduction

This policy reflects the desire by the Church of the Redeemer (“the Church”) to promote an inclusive community that embraces the gifts of all who come through its doors. It is intended to meet the requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, contained in Regulation 429/07 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. It applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

This policy is not only a declaration of our obligation to meet provincial requirements, but outlines the importance of hospitality and how our commitment to be inclusive and respectful of the dignity of all individuals within our community will be met. It is the responsibility of both the Board of Management and the Advisory Board to review this policy regularly and to ensure that the Church complies with current legislation. All programs and services provided by the Church are to reflect the principles of dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

B. Definitions

In this policy:

“Assistive Device” means a technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

“Disability” means:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect, or illness, and includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal, or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;

- (c) a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) a mental disorder; or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*.

“Guide Dog” means a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons’ Rights Act* to provide mobility, safety, and increased independence for people who are blind.

“Individuals” refers to staff, volunteers, parishioners, visitors, and anyone who enters the Church building, inclusive of persons with disabilities. The language used in this policy endeavors to be inclusive and to acknowledge the various abilities that all individuals bring to this community. However, in order to meet provincial standards, and for the sake of clarity, the term “disability” is used in various sections of this document.

“Service Animal” is an animal for a person with a disability if (a) it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or (b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

“Service Dog” is a dog other than a guide dog where (a) it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or (b) the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

“Support Person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to services.

C. Our Mission

The Church is a vibrant Christian community that celebrates diversity. We seek to serve the needs of the seasoned pilgrim, the sojourner, and the seeker. We strive to feed the poor and to stand with those in our society who have little or no voice. We nurture our children, support our teens, and glean wisdom from our elderly. We are a diverse community that makes room for all people. Whatever the project or endeavor, we steep our ministry in scripture, prayer, sacrament, and song.

D. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, the Church makes every effort to plan and deliver its programs in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with different abilities. We are also committed to providing all people the same opportunities to access worship services

and programs and to enabling them to contribute to, and benefit from, such access in the same places and in similar ways as other individuals.

E. Providing Programs and Services

The Church is committed to working with and serving all people, regardless of ability, and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities with that in mind in all ministry areas, including the following:

(i) Communication

Communications should be effected in ways that take into account individual requirements and particular needs. We will inform potential visitors and visitors through the church website, as well as make known to the church community and those who enter our doors, that alternative formats for publications such as church bulletins are available, and how those publications may be obtained.

(ii) Telephone Services

Staff and volunteers are expected to be sensitive in their telephone communications, using plain language and speaking clearly and slowly.

(iii) Assistive Devices

The Church is committed to working with individuals who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs and services. We will ensure that people are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices and mobility aids such as walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters to access worship services and programs to the greatest extent possible. We will familiarize greeters and other front-line volunteers and staff with the various assistive devices that may be used by individuals. The Church will provide assistive devices for hearing, and train staff and volunteers in their use.

(iv) Accessibility Advocate

An Accessibility Advocate, designated by the Board of Management and the Advisory Board, will liaise with the two Boards to oversee all issues related to accessibility at the Church. The Accessibility Advocate will link with ministry areas to communicate the need to assess accessibility requirements and identify potential training needs.

F. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

We welcome people who are accompanied by a service animal on those parts of our premises that are open to the public. It is our expectation that all staff and volunteers are

trained to interact with individuals who are accompanied by a service animal. We also welcome people who are accompanied by a support person. Those individuals who are allergic to dogs will be accommodated to the greatest extent possible.

G. Notice of Temporary Disruption

The Church will provide individuals with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services commonly used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice may be delivered to individuals in written form (i.e. through social media or the Church website) or verbally.

H. Training for Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers will be trained in how to properly assist people with varying abilities. That training will include how to assist people to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

The Accessibility Advocate will be responsible for working with ministry areas to identify training needs and a suitable approach to meeting such needs. The clergy will designate staff to do the same with third parties such as rental groups. All clergy, staff, and members of both the Board of Management and Advisory Board are expected to participate in accessibility training program in order to demonstrate their commitment to accessibility.

I. Feedback Process

Specific feedback on issues directly related to accessibility is welcomed by the Church, and is appreciated. Feedback can be provided by contacting the Accessibility Advocate. Alternatively, clergy, staff, or volunteers can be approached. Concerns will be addressed and documented in a confidential manner to the extent possible and within the parameters of the law.

Those who provide feedback and raise issues will receive a response. Communication needs to be a two-way exchange so that issues are brought forward and received by staff, volunteers and the Boards. If anyone has a question about the policy or its purpose, an explanation or reply will be provided by clergy or the Accessibility Advocate. The Accessibility Advocate will submit an annual report to Vestry.

J. Modifications to This or Other Policies

All policies maintained by the Church will be continually assessed, reassessed, and modified when necessary, having regard to their impact upon people with different abilities and their families.

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