

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH

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ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

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St. Paul's Church Accessibility Policy

1. Our Mission

Our Prime Purpose as a people of God is: To have fellowship motivated by the Holy Spirit and to express our Christian Faith in word and deed.

We are: To be a friendly, positive, nurturing and caring congregation enjoying each other in a spirit of openness. To be a hospitable congregation where everyone is made to feel welcome regardless of difference. To care for people of all ages and be openly responsive to their needs within the congregation, the community and the world.

2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, our church is committed to providing people with disabilities the same opportunity to access and benefit from our programs, goods and services with dignity and independence, in the same place, and in a similar way, as all other participants.

3. Providing Programs, Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

St. Paul's United Church is committed to excellence in serving all participants. We will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

3.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities with sensitivity and consideration for their disability.

We will provide publications in formats that are accessible for people with disabilities.

We will train staff, volunteers and other service suppliers to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3.2 Telephone Services

We will endeavour to provide telephone service in an accessible manner.

We will train staff/volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language; to speak clearly and slowly; and to use communication features such as volume control.

We will offer to communicate with participants by other means if telephone communication is not suitable or is not available.

3.3 Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs, goods and services.

We will ensure that people are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices to access the sanctuary for worship and other applicable programs, goods and services.

We will familiarize staff/volunteers and other service providers with the various assistive devices that may be used by participants with disabilities while accessing our programs, goods and services.

Staff/volunteers and other service providers will be trained in the use of the assistive devices available on our premises. Upon request from a member of our congregation for an assistive device not presently available, we will endeavour to respond in a considered and reasonable manner recognizing that final approval will be required from the Official Board.

3.4 Accessibility Committee

We are committed to establishing an Accessibility Committee to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Official Board.

The Accessibility Committee membership will be comprised of a cross section of congregants including those with disabilities and Official Board members as well as staff. The Committee shall have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 9 members. The Chair will be chosen from the Committee members.

The Accessibility Committee will have the following role:

The Committee will establish policies on providing accessible programs, goods and services to participants with disabilities that are in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

The Committee will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.

The Committee will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff, volunteers and other service suppliers.

The Committee will ensure that assistive devices provided by our church are in good working order. Requests for other or additional assistive devices will be considered, pending approval from the Official Board.

The Committee will be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints, concerns or requests.

The Committee will provide guidance and direction within St. Paul's United Church on subsequent AODA standard issuance

4. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

We are committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a service animal on those parts of our premises that are open to the public and other service suppliers.

We will ensure that all staff, volunteers and other service suppliers are trained on how to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal.

We are committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcomed into St. Paul's United Church premises with his or her support person.

Appropriate fees will be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to applicable services or programs.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

St. Paul's United Church will provide participants with notice in an appropriate manner in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

St. Paul's United Church's Accessibility Committee will coordinate training for all employees, volunteers and other service suppliers, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of accessibility policies, practices and procedures.

7. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of St. Paul's United Church is to ensure the needs of all "customers" are met including participants with disabilities.

Comments regarding how well those needs are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way St. Paul's United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made through the Feedback Procedure.

All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Committee.

Participants can expect to hear back in a timely manner.

Confidentiality will be respected.

Complaints (submitted in written or alternate format to any member of the St. Paul's United Church ministerial staff or any member of the Accessibility Committee) will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Committee. This procedure will be documented by the Accessibility Committee and made available to the congregation in defined locations and in multiple formats.

8. Modifications to this or Other Policies

We are committed to developing accessibility policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

No changes, therefore, will be made to this or any other policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities or their families.

Any policy of St. Paul's United Church that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

9. Questions about This Policy

This policy seeks to achieve service excellence to participants with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or its purpose, an explanation or reply will be provided by the Accessibility Committee.