

St. James United Church Accessibility – Customer Service Policy

Introduction

This policy contains statements that meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard. This policy will be revised as other standards are introduced under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

1. Our Mission

The Mission of St. James United Church in Etobicoke is to be a Spirit-filled, connected, transformational church that challenges the status quo and provokes interaction on our journey of faith.

2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, St. James United Church strives at all times to provide its programs, goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all people, including those with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our programs, goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place or similar, and in a similar way as other participants within the resources of the church.

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

St. James United Church is committed to excellence in serving all participants, including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities including but not limited in the following areas:

- a) Sunday worship
- b) Food basket
- c) Reiki
- d) Weekly Meditation
- e) Weekly integral healing
- f) Reflexology
- g) Justice working group
- h) Social and fund raising events, such as, luncheons, annual church picnic, musicals, etc.

3.1 Communication

- a) We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- b) We will provide publications in formats that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- c) We will train staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

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3.2 Telephone Services

- a) We are committed to providing reasonable accessible telephone services to our participants.
- b) We will train office staff/volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- c) We will offer to communicate with participants by email or facsimile if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

3.3 Assistive Devices

- a) We are committed to serving people who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs, goods and services.
- b) 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.
- c) We will familiarize ushers and other staff/volunteers with the various assistive devices that may be used by participants with disabilities while accessing our programs, goods and services.
- d) St James United Church does provide assistive hearing devices for accessing worship.
 - i. Usher Captains and other staff/volunteers will be trained on how to use the hearing assistive devices available in sanctuary.

3.4 Accessibility Committee/Liaison

- a) We have created a Compliance/Accessibility Liaison Committee to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Coordinating Committee and Unified Board.
- b) The Accessibility Committee membership will include congregants with disabilities or family members, congregants professionally or personally interested in accessibility, members of the Board/Council, and members of the staff (including maintenance staff).
- c) The Accessibility Liaison Committee will:
 - i. Establish policies to be approved by the St James Unified Board 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.
 - ii. Monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.

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- iii. The Accessibility liaison committee will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
- iv. Ensure that assistive devices provided by our church are in good working order and that requests for assistive devices are met, as per approval from the Board/Council.
- v. Be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.
- vi. Maintain a list of names with relevant disabilities and contact information.

4. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

- a) We welcome all people who are accompanied by a service animal on parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties.
- b) We will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with participants are trained on how to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal.
- c) We welcome all people who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who requires a support person will be allowed to enter St. James United Church premises with his or her support person.
- d) Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to any church sponsored function. This information will be on all event notices.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

St. James United Church will provide participants with notice 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. The notice will be delivered to participants as defined by the notification procedure.

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

St. James United Church's Accessibility Liaison Committee will be responsible for coordinating training for all employees, volunteers and others who deal with participants or other third parties on our behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of accessibility policies, practices and procedures.

Training will be done as staff and volunteers changes or legislative changes.

It is the responsibility of the each committee chair to inform the chair of the Accessibility committee as soon as their membership changes.

Individuals holding the following positions will be trained:

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- a. Co-ordinating Minister
- b. Family Minister & Pastoral Care
- c. Office Administrator
- d. Organist and Music Director
- e. Accompanist
- f. Youth choir director
- g. Youth choir assistant director
- h. Custodian
- i. Trustees
- j. Chair of the Unified Board
- k. Secretary of the Unified Board
- l. Chair and members of the Food Basket Steering and volunteers
- m. Presbytery representatives
- n. UCW members
- o. Chair and committee members of Ministry & Personnel
- p. Chair and committee members of Compliance/Accessibility
- q. Chair and committee members of Worship and Music
- r. Chair and committee members of Christian development
- s. Chair and committee members of Communications
- t. Chair and committee members of District Visitors
- u. Chair and committee members of Telephone network
- v. Chair and committee members of Finance
- w. Chair and committee members of Property
- x. Chair and committee members of Welcoming
- y. Chair, Captains and members of the Ushering teams,
- z. Chair and committee members of Lay pastoral care liaison
- aa. Chair and committee members of Outreach
- bb. Chair and committee members of Sunday school
- cc. Chair and committee members of Justice working group
- dd. Chair and committee members of Stewardship
- ee. Chair and committee members of Membership Care

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- ff. Chair and committee members of Long range planning
- gg. Chair and members of Reiki program

7. **Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of St. James United Church is to meet and surpass expectations while serving participants with disabilities.

Comments on our programs, goods and services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

- a) Feedback regarding the way St. James United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by :
 - I. Feedback card, found at end of each pew.
 - II. Suggestion box.
 - III. Email the church office at: stjames_uc@rogers.com
 - IV. Speaking to a Minister or usher.
- b) All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Liaison Committee.
- c) If requested, participants can expect to hear back within 10 days that their comments have been received and within 90 days in cases of resolving a problem.
- d) All matter will be held with the strictest confidentiality.

Complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Liaison Committee. Complaint procedures will be documented by the Accessibility Liaison Committee and made available to the congregation.

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.

- a) No changes, therefore, will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities or their families.
- b) Any policy of St. James United Church that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.
- c) Any change to the policy must be reviewed and approved by the Coordinating Committee before submitting to the Unified Board for final approval.

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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 Compliance and Accessibility Liaison Committee Chair.