



# St. John's United Church of Georgetown and Glen Williams

## Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policies, Procedures and Practices

Revised March 18, 2015



**Accessibility Standards for Customer Service  
Policies, Procedures and Practices  
St. John's United Church of Georgetown and Glen Williams**

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# **Customer Service Accessibility Policy, Procedures and Practices**

## **St. John's United Church, Georgetown and Glen Williams, ON**

**Revised March 2015**

This document outlines the accessibility customer service standards to be followed by the Accessibility Liaison Officer.

### **Definition of Accessibility**

The term accessibility is used in reference to persons with disability/i.e. As defined by the AODA, disability includes:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established in the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 ("Handicap")

Note: This policy contains statements that meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard established in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 and understood to be best practice. This policy will be revised, as required, when other standards are brought into force as per the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR), 2011.

In accordance with the AODA, St. John's United Church is committed to working to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers that interfere with their ability to access St. John's United Church's goods and services.

### **Our Mission**

St. John's United Church is one congregation with two places of worship in Georgetown and Glen Williams, Ontario, since 1839 in Georgetown and 1836 in Glen Williams. The congregation is known for its inclusive approach, outstanding music, and community outreach.

Our mission is to be a community for spiritual growth that welcomes all with open doors . . . open hearts . . . and open minds. Enjoying hospitality ~ strengthening spirituality ~ growing generosity are the goals of our church community.

## Our Commitment

St. John's United Church is 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, and in a similar way as other participants.

The Accessibility Liaison Officer shall ensure that the accessibility customer service standards as outlined below, and the spirit of the standards are integrated into existing St. John's United Church policies, and followed, to the best of this community's ability.

Our Accessibility Policy: Providing Programs, Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

St. John's United Church is committed to the accommodation of needs of people with disabilities in these milieus:

- Worship services
- Congregational, Council, and committee meetings
- Program, social, and community events
- Church-related meetings and activities – such as UCW, Ev's Kitchen, choir rehearsals, Saturday Centre

We are committed to supporting the accessibility policies and practices of organizations who rent our facilities, such as The United Way, Scouts Canada, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

# 1.0 COMMUNICATION

## 1.1 Policy:

St. John's United Church will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disabilities.

## 1.2 Procedures:

- St. John's United Church will provide information in formats that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- St. John's will train staff and volunteers to interact and communicate appropriately with people with various types of disabilities.
- When addressing a person, staff and volunteers will:
  1. Ask, "How can I help?"
  2. Give clear instructions and explanations.
  3. Observe and listen. What is being asked?
  4. Assess and ask what method of communication will be most effective – verbal, written or pictorial.
  5. Look for use of assistive devices, e.g., is the person wearing a hearing aid? If yes, staff and volunteers will wherever possible speak face-to-face in a quiet, well-lit setting to enable the person to see lips.
  6. Assess if the message has been received.
  7. Observe the person's response to the communication. Are there questions? Is the person puzzled? Ask if she understands. Use another communication format if necessary, e.g., writing, demonstrating, providing assistive devices.
  8. If language is a barrier, speak slowly, use body language, access a translator, invite the person to act as a translator.
  9. If understanding is a barrier, use examples or another format, e.g., writing.
  10. If reading is a barrier, provide large print and good lighting. Verbally guide the person through the document.
  11. Provide a variety of ways to respond, e.g., spoken, written, demonstration.
  12. Be patient; allow time for the person to respond without interruption.
  13. If the person disagrees, accept that the person has another opinion. Ask if the person would like to speak with someone else, perhaps someone with a higher level of authority.

## 1.3 Practices:

St. John's provides: large print hymn books, worship service material using enhanced sound system and visual projection on a large screen in the sanctuary, weekly communiques, our quarterly newsletter, The Vine, on-line and in print form.

## 2.0 TELEPHONE SERVICES

### 2.1 Policy:

St. John's United Church is committed to providing accessible telephone services to our participants. Whenever possible, St. John's United Church staff will offer TTY (teletypewriter) services using mobile phone technology.

### 2.2 Procedures:

St. John's United Church will train staff and volunteers to communicate with participants over the telephone in clear and plain language, and to speak clearly and slowly.

### 2.3 Practices:

- St. John's United Church offers to communicate with participants by alternate means, as required, including in person, by email, and using print materials when telephone communication neither accommodates their communication needs nor is available.
- A telephone is accessible at all times in a quiet and private room, if required.
- Emergency information, e.g., name and location of the office, are displayed by the phone.
- Assistance is be provided for those unable to use a phone, e.g., email

## 3.0 ASSISTIVE DEVICES

### 3.1 Policy:

St. John's United Church is committed to enabling people who use assistive devices to participate in and benefit from our programs.

### 3.2 Procedures:

St. John's United Church will ensure that people are permitted to use their own personal assistive devices when accessing programs, goods and services including: mobility devices such as canes, crutches, walkers, and wheelchairs; and, communication devices such as hearing aids.

We will ensure that our staff is familiar with and trained in the use of the various assistive devices that we have on site.

### 3.3 Practices:

- We are trained to use the following assistive devices available on our premises for participants: elevator and manual wheelchair.
- The staff and volunteers plan their activities with the needs of the people using assistive devices in mind so all people have equitable access to participating in all activities.
- Mobility devices: Staff or volunteers discuss with people the preferred stowing of their device to avoid creating safety concerns and/or to escort people with a walker or wheelchair to their seats.
- Signs will be posted to direct people using mobility devices to accessible washrooms, entrances, etc.
- Visual aids: Materials are made available in large print to those who request them.

## 4.0 ACCESSIBILITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

### 4.1 Policy:

St. John's is committed to designating an Accessibility Liaison Officer and establishing an Accessibility Committee to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with Council.

### 4.2 Procedures:

When establishing an Accessibility Committee, committee membership will be comprised of champions of accessibility for people with disabilities, including congregants with disabilities or family members, congregants professionally or personally interested in accessibility, members of Council, and members of our staff (including maintenance staff).

### 4.3 Practices:

St. John's United Church has designated Dianne Dillabough, Chair of the Accessibility Committee, as the inaugural Accessibility Liaison Officer to oversee all issues relating to accessibility.

The Accessibility Committee have the following responsibilities:

- monitor St. John's United Church programs, to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
- coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
- be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.

## 5.0 USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS

### 5.1 Policy:

St. John's is committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a service animal to those areas of our premises that are open to the public.

### 5.2 Procedures:

Staff and volunteers will be informed that persons with service animals are allowed full access to the public areas of the relevant venues, except for places where food is being prepared, in accordance with Ontario laws.

### 5.3 Practices:

- St. John's United Church ensures that all staff, volunteers, and others dealing with participants are trained to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal.
- St. John's United Church will create a safe distance between the service animal and individuals with allergies, phobias, or cultural mores that preclude proximity to a service animal.
- Persons with service animals will be encouraged to introduce/talk about their service animal.
- Staff and volunteers will not approach, speak to, or touch service animals unless explicitly requested by the animal's owner or guardian, as when asked to provide a dish of water on a hot day, for example.

## 6.0 SUPPORT PERSONS

### 6.1 Policy:

St. John's United Church is committed to welcoming a support person who is accompanying any participant who has a disability.

### 6.2 Procedures:

Support persons will not be charged an admission fee. Registration forms will include this information.

### 6.3 Practices:

- Support persons are seated in close proximity to the person with a disability.
- Staff and volunteers address the person with the disability directly, rather than through the support person, and will discuss their preferred method of communication.
- When entry or registration fees are associated with an event, participation fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant.

## 7.0 NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

### 7.1 Policy:

St. John's United Church will provide participants with notice in the event of a planned disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities, and will make every effort to provide notice in the event of any unexpected disruption.

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 by the most suitable means.

### 7.2 Procedures:

In the event of any disruption of services, St. John's will provide notice as soon as possible with the reason, the expected completion date and alternate facilities (St. John's in Glen Williams). This information will be posted on the website and/or delivered by email or telephone and/or announced and posted as appropriate.

### 7.3 Practices:

- Signs are placed at all public entrances to our premises explaining our disruption.
- If the disruption causes a cancellation of a workshop or meeting, participants are notified by email. If a member does not have email, a phone call is made to notify of the disruption.
- If the disruption is planned, announcements are made at up-coming services and/or meeting, uploaded to the website, and an email sent out.
- All announcements indicate the anticipated length of disruption and alternate facilities, if any.

## 8.0 TRAINING FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

### 8.1 Policy:

The Accessibility Liaison Officer 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 approvals of accessibility policies, practices and procedures.

### 8.2 Procedures:

At the beginning of each Church year, following the church's Annual General Meeting in February, the Accessibility Committee will conduct a training session with our staff, full Council, and committee members. If there are membership changes during the year, the committee's chair will notify the Accessibility Liaison Officer and training will be arranged.

### 8.3 Practices:

The Accessibility Committee is responsible for coordinating training for all employees, volunteers and others who deal with participants, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of accessibility policies, practices, and procedures.

Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- St. John's plan related to the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods or services to people with disabilities. These include the wheelchair, the elevator and the technology in our sanctuary.

NOTE: The Ushers and Greeters are trained in the use of the elevator. The Tech Teams are trained in the use of the sound system and visual projection in the sanctuary.

- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing St. John's goods and services.

A training session occurs every year as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting (February) for new volunteers who have joined our Council and/or committees. Staff is trained to implement these Accessibility Standards for Customer Service within a month of being hired.

Staff and volunteers are also trained whenever substantive or significant changes are made to our Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

## 9.0 FEEDBACK PROCESS

### 9.1 Policy:

St. John's is committed to meet or surpass expectations while serving participants with disabilities. Comments about whether our programs, goods and services meet those expectations are welcome and appreciated.

### 9.2 Procedures:

The Accessibility Liaison Officer will:

- Inform those accessing St. John's events that feedback may be made by telephone, in writing, by email or the use of a feedback form available in the church office and posted on the website.
- Provide feedback forms to persons expressing concern or appreciation for accessibility policies and procedures.
- Confirm receipt of feedback within five business days.

### 9.3 Practices:

St. John's United Church strives to meet or surpass expectations while serving participants with disabilities. Comments about whether our programs, goods and services meet those expectations are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback about how St. John's United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, in writing, by telephone, or by email.

- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Liaison Officer, either directly in writing, or received via the Office Administrator or other staff.
- Participants can expect to have a response to their feedback in a timely manner, within five business days.
- Confidentiality will be respected; anonymity can be assured at the request of the participant.

Compliments, concerns, and complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Committee. Complaints will be addressed by the Accessibility Committee and its response/resolutions will be reported to the St. John's United Church Council, including our ministers and the Office Administrator.

## 10.0 MODIFICATION TO THIS POLICY

### 10.1 Policy:

St. John's United Church is committed to developing accessibility policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

### 10.2 Procedure:

- This policy will be reviewed by the Accessibility Committee annually, with any changes ratified by Council and adopted by the Congregation at their Annual General Meeting.
- No changes, therefore, will be made to this policy before considering their impact.
- The Accessibility Committee will bring forward to Council for their consideration any policies of St. John's United Church that appear not to respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

### 10.3 Practices:

Same as procedures

## Questions about This Policy

This policy seeks to achieve service excellence for participants with disabilities.

If anyone has a question about the policy, or its purpose, please direct your queries to the Accessibility Liaison Officer, Dianne Dillabough, or her alternate.

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Co-chairs of Council

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Accessibility Liaison Officer

Revised on March 18, 2015

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service





## St. John's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Feedback Form

We value all people and strive to meet everyone's needs. If you have any comments or concerns, please fill out the form below and we will respond to your concerns within five business days.

1. Please tell us the date and time and event that you attended.

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2. Did we respond to your needs today?

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3. Were our programs/services provided to you in an accessible manner?

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4. Was our church accessible for you?

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5. Please add any other comments or concerns that you may have arising from your participation at St. John's.

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6. Contact information (optional; if you require a personal response from our Accessibility Liaison Officer or her designate, please provide your contact information including your name and your preferred time and method of contact – home address, business address, email or phone number)

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## Follow-up Form for Accessibility

Date Feedback Form received: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Feedback given: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*St. John's Accessibility Liaison Officer*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_