

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

St. Paul's United Church
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
Policy Statement
April, 2011



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH

22125 Communication Rd., Chatham, Ontario N7M 5J3 - Welcoming Communities Phone # 519-351-0328
<http://www.ruralunited.com/>

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

1. Our Mission Statement

St. Paul's United Church seeks to provide
a safe and inclusive faith community
that follows the example of Christ.

We strive to accept everyone as they are.

We welcome the ministry and participation of
all persons, inclusive of age, gender-identity, gender expression,
health, race, sexual orientation, marital status, differing abilities,
religious or ethnic background and economic circumstance,
and we recognize and celebrate the diverse abilities and gifts they bring.

Empowered by the teachings of Jesus
we are called to embody love
so lives are changed and the world
is transformed in a more just way.

2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, *St. Paul's United Church* is committed to include people with disabilities as full and active participants. We will remove barriers and attitudes that exclude people with disabilities from full and active participation. All people are encouraged to practice their faith and use their gifts in worship, service, study and leadership.

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

St. Paul's United Church is committed to excellence in serving all participants, including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

3.1 Communication

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

3.2 Telephone Services

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

3.3 Assistive Devices

- We are committed to serving people with disabilities 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 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.
- *St. Paul's United Church* will provide assistive devices it deems necessary for accessing worship and other applicable programs, goods and services.
 - ⊖ Ushers and other staff/volunteers will be trained on how to use these assistive devices available
- Upon a participant's request, we will make every effort to provide the requested assistive device and/or service and to cover relevant financial expenses, upon approval from the Board/Council.

3.4 Accessibility Committee/Officer

- We are designating the Board of Stewards as our Accessibility Committee to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Congregation.
- The Stewards will ensure there are members who champion accessibility for people with disabilities, including congregants with disabilities or family members, congregants professionally or personally interested in accessibility.
- The Accessibility sub-committee of the Stewards will have several roles:
 - The Accessibility sub-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 volunteers.
 - The committee will 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 Congregation.
 - The committee will be responsible for developing feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.

4. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

- We are committed to welcoming people who are accompanied by a service animal on parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties.
- We will ensure that all volunteers and others dealing with participants 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 allowed to enter *St. Paul's United Church* premises with his or her support person.
- Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to Church Dinners or entertainment.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

St. Paul's 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 by means of e-mail, letter or telephone

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

St. Paul's United Church's Accessibility 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 approvals of accessibility policies, practices and procedures.

Individuals holding the following positions will be trained:

A sub-committee of the Board of Stewards will be committed toward training, either themselves or persons so designated

7. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of *St. Paul's 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.

- Feedback regarding the way *St. Paul's United Church* provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email, verbally, suggestion box, feedback card, etc.
- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility sub-committee.
- Participants can expect to hear back in 14 days.
- Confidentiality will be respected

Complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Board of Stewards. Complaint procedures will be documented by the Board of Stewards and made available to the congregation. (Sample feedback forms pages 6-7)

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 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 Board of Stewards.

DOCUMENT REQUESTING FEEDBACK

Dear Valued Participant,

We strive to improve accessibility for our members, adherents and visitors with disabilities. We would like to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of our programs, goods and services to people with disabilities. Participant feedback forms are available in the entryway of our church.

Please call (519-351-0328) or e-mail (spuc@ciaccess.com) to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy. You can also leave your feedback form in the box located in the Narthex / entryway of St. Paul's United Church.

Thank you:

St. Paul's Board of Stewards

Participant Feedback Form, re Accessibility

Thank you for attending *St. Paul's United Church*. We value all people and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time you attended *St. Paul's United Church*: _____

Did we respond to your needs today? (Circle one) Yes No

Were our programs and services accessible to you? (Circle one)
Yes *(please explain below)* Somewhat *(please explain below)* No

Were our programs/service provided to you in an accessible manner (Circle one)?
Yes Somewhat *(please explain below)* NO *(please explain below)*

Please add any other comments you may have:

Contact information (if you wish a reply):

Thank you

St. Paul's United Church Board of Stewards

DOCUMENT FOR RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

Record of Participant Feedback

Date feedback received: _____

Name of participant (optional): _____

Contact information (if appropriate)*:

(*Please note: There may be privacy implications for organizations collecting personal information. Places of worship should seek their own legal advice regarding the privacy implications of collecting personal information in this manner)

Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

St. Paul's United Church Accessibility Committee Member: _____

Date: _____