

UUCR ANIMAL POLICY

Subject: Animal Access Policy

Effective Date: March 2, 2016

Adopted By: UUCR Board

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston endeavors to be welcoming and accommodating to all persons.

The following guidelines indicate what is expected of a person bringing a service animal into the church, and what is expected of members of the congregation in helping to make the experience positive for everyone involved.

1. With the exception of service dogs, the presence of animals, (e.g., pet dogs and cats) in the church building, shall be limited to special occasions, organized and supervised by members of the church.
 - a. Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not considered service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - b. Emotional support, therapy, or comfort or companion animals are only permitted in the church if they remain in their pet carrier at all times or on a leash no longer than three feet. These animals shall be kept on a leash, off the furniture, and under control of the owner.
2. Service dogs, on the other hand, are allowed in the building. As defined by the American Disabilities Act, a service dog is any dog assisting a person with a disability. Service dogs directly assist their owners with daily tasks and are meant to be with their owners at all times.
 - a. Types of service dogs include dogs for the blind, hearing and signal dogs for the hearing impaired, and assistance dogs that help by picking things up, pulling wheelchairs, opening doors, etc.
 - b. At church services and events in the church, a service dog shall remain on the floor, immediately adjacent to the person responsible. A service dog shall be kept on a leash, off the furniture, and under control of the individual using the dog.
 - c. Service dogs are working dogs; church members, friends and visitors should not initiate or engage in verbal or physical contact with the dog by beckoning or calling, or attempting to engage the dog in play, and should not pet the dog.

3. Regarding food service areas, common sense is the rule, with consideration given to the guided person's right to utilize their dog to maintain independence and mobility.
4. All animals must be quiet and not disrupt events; any animal disrupting an event is to be removed from the building immediately.
5. The person bringing a service dog or emotional support animal into the church building shall be financially responsible for any damage caused by the animal. It is expected that the person bringing the animal into the building will inform the minister or church officers of any safety issues, special considerations, or dangers the animal may pose to children or adults in attendance so that these concerns can be addressed and shared with the congregation, as appropriate.