



First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Connect. Inspire. Engage.

Service Dog Policy

With the exception of service dogs, the presence of animals, (e.g., pet dogs, cats, birds, reptiles etc) in the church facility is prohibited except for special occasions or pre-approved events.

As defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA, and are not permitted in church buildings.

Service animals may accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

The person bringing the service animal into the church building shall be financially responsible for any damage caused by the animal. It is expected that the person bringing the service animal into the building will inform the minister, staff 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 when appropriate. Since a service animal is a working animal, members of the congregation should not seek verbal or physical contact by beckoning or calling, or attempting to pet or engage the service animal in play.

For more information, please read the Americans with Disabilities Act FAQ's [here](#).

Staff approved 1/21/19