

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy Statement



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

1. Our Missions

The Mission of Bethany United Church is:

God gathers us as a community of Jesus Christ who care for one another, the wider community, and the world.

The Mission of Elora United Church is:

We are:

- growing deeper as followers of Jesus;
- looking higher to celebrate God in all we do;
- reaching wider to share blessings with our neighbourhoods and beyond;
- drawing closer as a community.

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

In fulfilling our mission, Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge strives at all times to provide its programs, goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities an 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 to other participants. We will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

worship

fundraising or social events

meals

learning events such as a book group

2.1 Communication

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

2.2 Telephone Services

- We are committed to providing accessible telephone services to our participants.
- We will train office staff/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 or relay services if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

2.3 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, whenever possible, 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.
- Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge 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 the assistive devices available on our premises, including:
 - *elevator*
 - *Sound Mate personal listening system (Elora United)*
- 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.

4. Use of Support Persons and Service Animals

- 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 Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge premises with his or her support person.
- Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to programs, including programs with meals.
- 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 staff, volunteers and others dealing with participants are trained on how to interact with people who are accompanied by a service animal.

3. Accessibility Committee/Officer

- We are committed to designating an Accessibility Officer to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Official Board.
- The Accessibility Officer will have several roles:
 - The officer will recommend 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 officer will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
 - The officer will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.

- The officer will ensure that assistive devices provided by our churches are in good working order and that requests for assistive devices are met, as per approval from the Board/Council.
- The officer will be responsible for recommending feedback procedures, reviewing feedback on accessibility and responding to any complaints or concerns.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge will provide anticipated 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.

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge's Accessibility 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.

Individuals holding the following positions will be trained as needed:

staff
Board/Council
children and youth program leaders
ushers/greeters
"AV squad" (Elora United)

7. Feedback Process

Our goal is for all our services to be available for participants with disabilities.

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

- Feedback regarding the way Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made verbally, by email, letter or telephone.
- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Officer and, if necessary, to the Joint Board.
- Confidentiality will be respected

Complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Officer. Complaint procedures will be documented by the Accessibility Officer and made available to the congregation. (Sample feedback form in Appendix 1)

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 Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge 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 serve participants with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or its purpose, an explanation or reply will be provided by the Accessibility Officer. *[in April 2013, officer is Administrator Judy McMullan]*

APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK
Sample notice of the Feedback Process

Dear Valued Participant,

We strive to improve accessibility for our participants 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 from the churches' office.

Please call 519-846-0122 or e-mail elorabethanyuc@bellnet.ca to share your comments, or request a copy of our accessibility policy.

Thank you:

Accessibility Officer

Participant Feedback Form

Thank you for attending Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge. We value all people and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time you attended one of our churches:

Which church? _____

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

Were our programs and services accessible to you?

Yes Somewhat (please explain below) No (please explain below)

Were our programs/service provided to you in an accessible manner?

Yes Somewhat (please explain below) No (please explain below)

Please add any other comments you may have:

Contact information (optional):

Thank you

Accessibility Officer

Record of Participant Feedback

Date feedback received:

Name of participant (optional):

Contact information (if appropriate):

Details:

Follow-up:

Action to be taken:

Accessibility Officer: _____

Date: _____