

Jennings Creek Christian Reformed Church
Service Standards Policy for people with disabilities
In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
Approved April 7, 2016

Table of Contents:

1. Our Theological Position
2. Our Commitment
3. Application of the policy
4. Providing programs, ministries, and services to people with disabilities
5. Use of service animals and support persons
6. Notice of temporary disruption
7. Training staff
8. Feedback process
9. Modification to this policy
10. Questions about this policy

1. Our Theological Position

- a. Jennings Creek CRC values people with disabilities as created in the image of God, as partners to the covenant, and as co-labourers in the kingdom of God
- b. Jennings Creek CRC considers all people -- with disabilities and without--to have gifts from the Holy Spirit, and we encourage everyone to enrich congregational life by practicing their faith, using their gifts in ministries of discipleship, leadership, and mission.
- c. Jennings Creek CRC endeavours to integrate people with disabilities into all ministries and activities of the church in keeping with the beliefs and practices taught in Scripture. This includes worship, education, small groups, outreach, activities, etc.
- d. Jennings Creek CRC seeks to name, understand, and attend to the special spiritual, physical, and psychological needs of those of us affected by disabilities, including caregivers, and will offer education and training to respond appropriately to disability issues and to raise awareness in the Church.
- e. Jennings Creek CRC seeks to remove all barriers to participation with ample discussion by all parties concerned in order to accomplish this in goal in an open and reasonable way.

2. Our commitment

In fulfilling our purposes and theological position, Jennings Creek CRC strives at all times to provide its programs, ministries, goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Jennings Creek CRC is also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access its programs, ministries, and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as do people without disabilities.

3. Application of policy

This policy shall apply to every person who deals with members of the public and other third parties on behalf of this church, whether the person does so as an employee, agent or otherwise (collectively referred to as "staff").

4. Providing programs, ministries, goods and service to people with disabilities

Jennings Creek CRC is committed to excellence in serving all individuals, including people with disabilities, and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

a. Communication

We will endeavour to communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff who communicate with people on how to interact and communicate with people with various disabilities.

b. Telephone services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to everyone. We will train staff to communicate with individuals over the telephone in clear plain language to speak clearly and slowly. We will offer to communicate with people by e-mail [insert other means of communication that apply] if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

c. Assisted devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from our programs, ministries, and services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by individuals with disabilities while accessing our programs, ministries, and services. We will also ensure that staff know how to use the assistive devices available on our premises for individuals with disabilities.

5. Use of service animals and support persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of the premises that are open to the public. We will also ensure that all staff are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the church premises accompanied by his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

6. *Notice of temporary disruption*

Jennings Creek CRC will provide 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, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.

7. *Training staff*

Jennings Creek CRC will provide training to all employees, ministry leaders and volunteers and others who deal with the public; as well as to those involved in the development and approval of service policies, practices and procedures.

This training will be provided within 90 days after staff commence their duties.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standards.
- 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 available assistive devices.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the church's programs, ministries, goods and services and/or church policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Applicable staff will also be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way programs, ministries, and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

8. *Feedback process*

The ultimate goal of Jennings Creek CRC is to meet and surpass peoples' expectations while serving individuals with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the church provides accommodations to people with disabilities can be made using the *Accessibility Feedback Form*. Individuals can expect to hear back in 10 business days if follow-up is requested.

9. *Modification of this policy*

Jennings Creek CRC is committed to developing service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of the church that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified and/or removed.

10. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to everyone with disabilities. If anyone has a question about this policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to the Executive of Council.

Adopted by the Council of Jennings Creek CRC as attested to by the signatures of the Chair and Clerk of Council

this April 7, 2016

Chair.....

Clerk.....