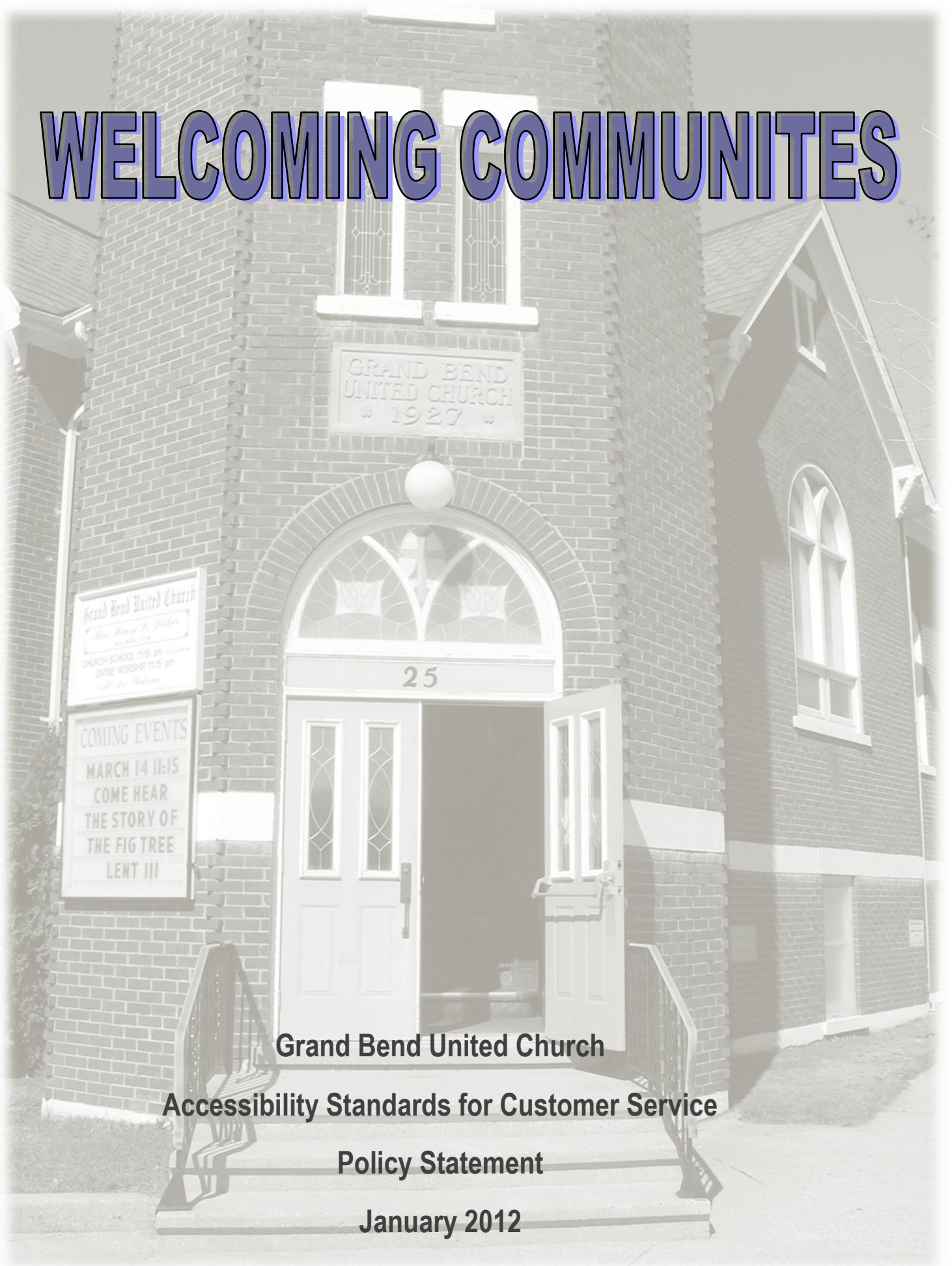


WELCOMING COMMUNITIES



Grand Bend United Church

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Policy Statement

January 2012

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 will be revised as other standards are introduced under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

1. Our Mission

The Vision of Grand Bend United Church is “Faith Issuing in Action.” It is our Mission to apply this vision by welcoming and including all persons with disabilities.

2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Grand Bend United Church will endeavour to include people with disabilities as full and active participants. We will develop attitudes that include people with disabilities in 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

Grand Bend United Church will endeavour to serve all participants, including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas: indoor worship, outdoor worship, all meetings and special events held at the church.

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 staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3.2 Telephone Services

- We will endeavour to provide 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 if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs, or is not available.

3.3 (a) Assistive Devices

- We will endeavour to serve 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.

3.3 (a) Assistive Devices – cont'd

- 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.
- Grand Bend 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 access the assistive devices available on our premises, including: large print bulletins, hearing devices, power point system and ability to enlarge print on our website.
- Upon a participant's request, we will make every effort to provide the requested assistive device and/or service.

(b) Special Needs

- We will endeavour to serve people with developmental, intellectual and learning disabilities.
- We will endeavour to serve people with physical disabilities that may result from: arthritis, amputations, heart or lung issues and injury or surgery.
- We will endeavour to serve people with allergies to scents, cleaning products and food allergies.
- We will familiarize volunteers/staff with information needed to provide a safe and caring environment for these persons.

3.4 Accessibility Team

- We are committed to designating an Accessibility Team to oversee all issues relating to accessibility in consultation with the Board/Council.
- In establishing an Accessibility Team, team membership will be comprised of champions of accessibility for people with disabilities, including congregants with disabilities or family members, congregants professionally or personally interested in accessibility, members of the Board/Council, and members of the staff (including maintenance staff).
- **The Accessibility Team will have several roles:**
 - The team 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 team will monitor our programs, goods and services to ensure that practices and procedures are consistent with our governing policies.
 - The team will coordinate accessibility training and training materials for all relevant staff and volunteers.
 - The team 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 Board/Council.
 - The team 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 will endeavour to welcome 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.
- We will endeavour to welcome 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 Grand Bend United Church premises with his or her support person.
- Fees will not be charged for support persons accompanying a participant to any service or program.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Grand Bend 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 may be delivered to participants by means of phone, email, weekly bulletin, door sign, verbal announcement, or posting on website.

6. Training for Staff and Volunteers

Grand Bend United Church's Accessibility Team 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.

7. Feedback Process

- The ultimate goal of Grand Bend 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 Grand Bend United Church provides programs, goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email, verbally, suggestion box, or feedback forms.
- All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Team.
- Participants can expect a response either written or verbal.
- Confidentiality will be respected.
- Complaints will be addressed according to the procedures outlined by the Accessibility Team. Complaint procedures will be documented by the Accessibility Team and made available to the congregation.

8. Modifications to this or Other Policies

- We will endeavour to develop 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 Grand Bend 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 a member of the Accessibility Team.