

Operations Policy

Animals on Premises

The Senior Minister is responsible for ensuring that these policies are implemented. Questions on the implementation of this policy go to the Assistant Minister for Operations.

Service Animals

UUAA is committed to accommodating certified service animals to the greatest extent possible in all congregational activities, taking into consideration and managing other congregational needs.

For example, the presence of service animals affects members with dog allergies. In such a case, the person with allergies and the person with the dog should do their mutual best to create sufficient distance between them.

While religious organizations are not subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the congregation aims to meet or exceed those standards for accessibility.

Expectations of Service Animals and Handlers

UUAA expects service animals and their handlers to adhere to the following:

- Service animals remain with their handlers while on campus.
- Service animals should not sit on congregational furniture.
- 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.
- Service animals should not whine, bark, grumble, growl, or make other noises. An exception may be if the whining is an alert, such as to notify a handler who is experiencing a panic attack or a drop in blood sugar. (NOTE: A single bark does not mean the dog is being disruptive.)
- Service animals should not obstruct an area used for emergency evacuation.

UUAA staff may make exceptions to this policy to accommodate unique events.

Expectations of Others Around Service Animals

When a service animal is working, the handler's life could depend on its ability to stay focused.

UUAA expects congregants, visitors, and others who come into contact with service animals and their handlers to adhere to the following:

- Speak to the handler rather than the service animal.
- Treat the handler with sensitivity and respect. Personal questions about the person's disability are an invasion of privacy.

- Avoid distracting the service animal by offering it food or by touching or petting it without asking permission.
- Keep other dogs at a distance from a working dog.
- Don't assume a napping service animal is off duty.
- If a working dog approaches you, sniffs or nudges you, etc., politely let the handler know. The handler will correct the dog.

Emotional Support/Comfort Animals

An emotional support/comfort animal (ESA) — typically a dog or cat — provides a therapeutic benefit to its handler through companionship and is not specifically trained or certified to perform tasks for a person with emotional, psychiatric, or mental health-related disabilities.

If an ESA alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a mental health-related disability, the handler (or the caretaker of a handler) may request an in-person appointment with a member of the ministerial staff to discuss reasonable accommodation for the ESA. Approval is strictly on a case-by-case basis. Approved ESAs must comply with all the expectations listed under the service animal policy.

Unless a minister grants approval, an ESA is not permitted regular access to the building for Sunday services or other classes, events, or programs. Therefore, requests for appointments should be made well in advance of a plan to attend.

When UUAA holds a special “blessing of the animals” service, ESAs are welcomed according to the guidelines laid out by the worship team for that Sunday.

Other Animals and Pets

Pets/show-and-tell animals and their handlers are welcome to visit the congregation's outdoor areas provided that handlers:

- Maintain control of their animal(s) for the duration of the visit. Animals may not be left unattended.
- Remove their animal's detritus from the property.
- Make every effort to minimize their impact on the environment and other visitors to the congregation, especially those with pet allergies.

Animals may be allowed inside the building for program-related activities with the approval of the Assistant Minister for Operations. When UUAA holds a special “blessing of the animals” service, pets are welcomed according to the guidelines laid out by the worship team for that Sunday.

Horses are only allowed on the property by special permission from the Senior Minister or their designee.

These policies are subject to change without notice. Changes in policy must be approved by the Senior Minister or their designee.

Revision History		
DATE	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	REVISED BY
March 17, 2014	Most recent policy for animals and pets	–
September 17, 2019	Added information for service and comfort/emotional support animals, in consultation with the Shared Ministries Team and Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (May and September 2019)	Rev. L. Ulrich