

# **Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Thunder Bay:**

## **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Services to Persons with Disabilities**

Effective Date: December 1, 2011

Approved by: Congregational Council, Dec 11, 2011

### **1. Our Mission Statement**

We are Christians gathered together as a family to grow in our relationship with God. Our purpose is to learn, live, and spread God's word and share in the sacraments.

### **2. Our Commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Thunder Bay ("Our Saviours", "the congregation") strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. The congregation is committed to providing people with disabilities the same opportunity to access the congregation's goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as others, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

Our Saviour's forms part of a federated parish with Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Thunder Bay ("the parish"). As such, various goods and services are provided jointly through the parish organization on the premises of Our Saviour's. The congregation's standards acknowledge its responsibility in maintaining accessibility standards for joint "parish" programmes offered on the premises of Our Saviour's.

Copies of each congregation's Standards document are available through the Parish Office, 807-344-1926.

### **3. Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities**

Our Saviour's is committed to serving all individuals, including people with disabilities and we will carry out our responsibilities and functions in the following areas:

#### **o 3.1 Communication**

Employees of Our Saviour's and of the parish will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that will take into account their disabilities. In order to achieve this goal, all those who work with the public, including staff, volunteers and third

parties, will be trained on how to effectively interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. In addition, Our Saviour's and the parish will provide alternate methods of communication upon request and as quickly as possible.

o **3.2 Assistive Devices**

If a person with a disability requires assistive technology to access programs, goods or services at the congregation, they are allowed to use such devices. Assistive technology is defined as any item, piece of equipment, or product that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. When available, the congregation will provide assistive technology in order to allow people with disabilities to access congregational and parish programs, goods and services. Our Saviour's and the parish will promote staff awareness on the various forms of assistive technology and devices that may be used by people with disabilities. For a list of assistive devices that may be available at each congregation, please contact the Parish Office.

**4. Use of Service Animals**

Our Saviour's and the parish 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 and other third parties. Such individuals will be permitted to keep the animal with them unless it is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. In such cases, Our Saviour's and the parish will look to alternate available measures to enable the person to obtain, use or benefit from the congregation's and parish's goods and services.

Staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public will be properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

**5. Use of Support Persons**

Our Saviour's and the parish are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a 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 in those areas of the premises that are open to the public or other third parties. Our Saviour's and the parish may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on the premises in order to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others.

For events on the premises at which an admission charge is levied, fees may be charged for support persons who accompany people with disabilities. Our Saviour's and the parish will provide advance notice of the amount payable.

## **6. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

Our Saviour's and the parish will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services on the premises 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 posted in the parish's email communication, Sunday bulletin, and newsletter, and will be placed at the premises at appropriate public entrances and other areas as deemed appropriate.

## **7. Training for Staff**

Our Saviour's and the parish will provide training to all employees, volunteers, and other people who interact with the public on behalf of Our Saviour's and the parish and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Training may be offered in a variety of formats including mandatory training modules, handouts or fact sheets at orientation sessions, or some other format.

Training modules will be made available to all applicable congregational and parish employees, volunteers and third parties. New employees to Our Saviour's and the parish will be required to complete the training at the time of orientation. Volunteers will be required to complete training during orientation and before they are to begin their duties.

Our Saviour's and the parish will ensure that any contracted staff members who may perform duties for the congregation and the parish and may reasonably be expected to connect with the public will be trained on the expectations for them to meet the customer service standards.

Records of training will be kept in the Parish Office.

Training will include the following:

- Purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard
- 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 support person or a service animal.
- Where assistive devices are available on the premises, staff in these areas will know how to use the devices to assist individuals with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing congregational and parish goods and services

Our Saviour's and the parish will also provide ongoing training, when needed, to reflect changes to policies, practices and procedures that impact people with disabilities. Training will also be provided to congregational and parish staff involved in developing policies, practices and procedures on requirements of the Customer Service Standard.

## **8. Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of Our Saviour's is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving persons with disabilities. Comments on the congregation's and parish's services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Our Saviour's provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made known using various methods and will take into consideration the fact that individuals with disabilities may require access to different forms of communication depending upon their disability. This means that feedback can be given verbally, by email, by telephone, via suggestion box, in writing or through a third party.

All feedback will be directed to Our Saviour's Congregational Council. Any complaints received will be dealt with in the normal channels for dealing with complaints. Normally, individuals can expect a response back to the feedback within one month.

## **9. Modifications to this or other policies**

Our Saviour's is committed to developing customer 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 Our Saviour's that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

## **10. Questions about this policy**

This policy exists to achieve excellence in service to persons with disabilities when accessing the goods and services provided at Our Saviour's. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, please refer the question to Our Saviour's Congregational Council.

## **11. Review**

The parish pastor will ensure that this policy is reviewed within three (3) years and will recommend any changes deemed necessary to the Congregational Council.