

SERVICE ANIMAL GUIDELINES FOR LONGVIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Longview Presbyterian seeks to be a welcoming place for all people, including those who have a need for service animals. The following is intended to be a guide for the congregants in understanding the presence of service animals in our church. These service animal guidelines aim to take into consideration the needs of those who have a need for assistance from service animals, and address the concern of someone who may be allergic or fearful of different animals. Service animals include any animal trained to assist with disability issues including any physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or developmental challenges. Additionally, we want to welcome animals being trained for the use as service animals.

We expect that the handler is responsible for caring for and supervising the service animal. All service animals are to be under the control of the owner, either by being on a leash, in the arms of the owner, or other method of containment.

Service animals are animals that are trained to perform specific tasks to assist people who might otherwise be unable to participate in community activities. They may be assisting the person by picking up items for the person, preventing a child from wandering away, alerting a person to an immediate physical need, providing stability for a person who has difficulty walking, etc. The task(s) performed by the animal must be directly related to the person's disability.

As defined by ADA requirements, emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not included as part of the church's guidelines. However, psychiatric service animals such as those trained to alert to an anxiety attack and take a specific action to help avoid the attack or lessen its impact, would qualify as a service animal.

As a welcoming faith community we need to keep in mind that a service animal is not a pet. The service animal's job is to make sure that their person can be in the community safely. The temptation to approach an adorable animal can be difficult for children and adults alike, but should be avoided without the permission of the handler.

Basic Expectations:

- Service dogs should, at a minimum, have the ability to pass an AKC Canine Good Citizen test. (LPC has access to an AKC CGC evaluator if needed).
- All service animals should be regularly groomed, have current vaccinations, and have routine veterinary care
- Service animals should be reliably house broken and any accident is the responsibility of the handler to manage or obtain help to do so.
- Animals will be under the control at all times either with their handler or another designated handler.
- Animals will not be in food preparation areas and handlers will be sensitive to times when the congregation is eating as a group to ensure good manners from their assistance animals towards others.

Our desire is to be a congregation who welcomes all. Please feel free to call a LPC pastor or the church office if you have any questions or concerns.

References:

https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html

<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/washington-laws-on-service-dogs-and-emotional-support-animals.html>

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/administrative-staff-and-finance/service-animals-help-your-ministry-respond-appropriately/>