

UUC Policy on Animals in the Building

Adopted by UUC Board on August 13, 2020

Following Virginia Code § 51.5-40.1 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), UUC defines service animals as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The tasks performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. These definitions specifically exclude animals providing emotional support, therapy, comfort, companion or similar functions.

No animals other than fully trained service animals are allowed in the UUC building. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, UUC staff or leaders, again, following the rules of the ADA, may ask two questions of the handler: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform.

UUC expects service animals and their handlers to meet the following expectations:

1. Service animals are to remain with their handlers while on UUC property.
2. As some congregants may have health or emotional problems being around dogs, the person with a service dog may be asked to accommodate those people by keeping an appropriate distance or using a particular routing through the building.
3. 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.
4. Service animals shall not whine, bark, grumble, growl or make other noises unless that noise is an alert, such as to notify a handler who is experiencing a panic attack or a drop in blood sugar.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be made in consultation with the minister to accommodate unique events and situations