

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Maple Grove United Church

“Where the Spirit Soars and the Heart Finds a Home”

Church logo

Customer Service Standard

Maple Grove United Church is committed to providing an equitable and inclusive environment. To achieve this goal, the church depends on the full participation of all members -- staff, leaders, volunteers, participants, and those who use our building – to identify, remove and reduce barriers to full participation in the life of the church and community.

Concerns in Accessing Services

If someone is having difficulty accessing services due to a disability, please contact the church administrator, Bobbi-Jo Walker or the Rev. Dr. Morar Murray-Hayes. (905) 845-5721 mguc@cogeco.net

More information regarding the AODA is available at www.accesson.ca/ado/splash.htm

Information regarding the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) is available at www.ohrc.on.ca

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Disclosing a Disability

Persons with disabilities choose whether or not to disclose a disability based on a number of factors, including the relationship, the context of the interaction, their perception of the inquiry (curiosity versus assistance) and their comfort level.

People do not necessarily request service or accommodation or identify themselves as having a disability.

Persons who disclose information about their disability are revealing information regarding their own health and body that would ordinarily be considered private between persons who do not know each other well.

How a disclosure is received can affect how a person will approach a new situation or relationship. For example, how a person's disclosure is received, may determine whether they attend church services or community programs in our church in the future. It may even depend on the development of their faith. Disclosures should always be received respectfully and sensitively.

If you are unsure of how to assist someone with a disability, ask them – they are their own expert regarding accommodation!

What is a Disability?

As defined by the by the AODA, a disability is:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) a condition or mental impairment or a developmental disability;

- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) a mental disorder; or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

We all play a role in creating a positive environment at Maple Grove United Church.

Here are a few helpful accommodation tips for meetings and events.

Assistive Devices

Assistive devices help a person with a disability do everyday tasks and activities. Some devices include: laptops, pocket recorders, digital audio players; hearing aids, teletypewriters (TTY) for people unable to speak or hear by phone; mobility devices such as scooters, walkers or crutches, magnifiers, white cane; communication boards (which use symbols, words or pictures to create messages), speech generating devices.

Support People and Animals

A Support Person accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs.

Please welcome the support person, but focus service and communication to the individual.

Support Animals are welcome at Maple Grove.

Please do not distract the service animal – this includes talking, petting or feeding.

Food and drink

Provide straws with beverages.

Request a list of ingredients for food provided, and display it near the food.

Location

As of March, 2010, our church has updated its accessibility in the following ways: We have an elevator that reaches all floors and is big enough to accommodate a wheelchair or scooter and a support person. The washrooms in the gymnasium and on the top floor of the church are wheelchair accessible. The building is now air conditioned. The kitchen is not designed for wheel chair use, and the washrooms in the east lobby are not accessible.

If required, we will attempt to provide American Sign Language for services.

Our public address system in the Sanctuary has adjustable volume.

We are called to ensure there is appropriate event signage and adequate lighting.

We are called to be aware that common background noise can be distracting. Hence we do not provide background music at our seasonal lunches.

Presenters are reminded to speak in a clear, well-timed manner to allow assistive devices or ASL support to translate properly.

Ask the participant where he or she would like an accompanying support person to be seated.

Communication

Respond to accommodation requests in the same manner you would to other event-related questions.

Ensure invitations provide accessibility information, including parking, ramps and entrances and someone to contact for any accommodation needs.

Allow participants to use software to assist them if needed; email material before the meeting or event.

Arrival

Be aware and post with advertising if certain relied upon services do not work (e.g. elevator, automatic door entrances).

Plan for snow removal from stairs/ramps when required.

Clear clutter from hallways to ensure easier maneuverability.

Indicate entrances that might not be accessible and clearly state how one would go to the accessible entrance. The rear (west) entrance of the church is accessible.

Remove or tape any wires that might cross the floor, such as computer or phone lines.

Resources

Maple Grove provides an assistive device loan service to members. Devices can be requested through the church office.

Staff members are available and willing to respond to any concern about accessibility to the best of their ability.