

# **Towson Unitarian Universalist Church**

## **ANIMALS IN THE CHURCH**

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

To create a safe environment for all working and visiting the facilities. Provide space for those who need service animals and those who have allergies.

### **2.0 SCOPE**

All employees and visitors who travel with their animals.

### **3.0 REVIEW OF POLICY**

The Administrative Team periodically review this policy and make revisions.

### **4.0 Details**

No animals will be allowed in building except for:

1. Service/Companion/Assistance Animals required due to a disability.
2. Certified Therapy Animals with prior approval of a TUUC staff member.
3. Animals being used as part of a worship or Religious Education program.

Reasoning: Under ADA guidelines, service animals (also known as Companion animals and Assistance animals) are not required to be trained or certified. The only requirements are that the animal be required due to a disability, be under control of the owner, and be house trained. Animal owners can only be asked if the animal is required for a disability, but may not ask what the disability is. Other federal guidelines make allowances for companion animals and assistance animals-- again, with the condition that the animal is required by the person to function normally in that space. Not all service animals are certified nor have they all received special training, so this isn't a condition we can require.

Therapy animals are NOT protected by ADA or other federal laws. These animals are specially trained and certified to be able to visit schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and trauma sites. Owners of therapy animals are required by the certifying agency to follow strict procedures and guidelines-- including asking for permission before bringing an animal on-site.