CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

ANIMAL POLICY

The vision of The Church of the Good Shepherd is that it serves as a refuge, welcoming all, providing support, education and fellowship to the Greer community and beyond. We recognize the needs of those who may require the use of service and emotional support animals.

Service Animals. Under South Carolina's disability rights law and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities have the right to be accompanied by their service animals in all places that are open to the public, sometimes referred to as ”public accommodations”. Religious entities, such as churches, are not considered public accommodations under the ADA. However, Good Shepherd will strive to welcome service animals in a manner consistent with State and Federal public accommodation laws. Under these laws, Good Shepherd would be allowed to ask only two questions: (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?

Emotional Support Animals. Neither the ADA nor South Carolina's public accommodation law covers emotional support animals (ESAs). Emotional support animals provide a sense of safety, companionship, and comfort to those with psychiatric or emotional conditions. Although ESAs often have therapeutic benefits, they aren't individually trained to assist a person with a disability, so they don't fit the definition of service animals under South Carolina law or the ADA.

General Policies

* Although miniature horses may be considered service animals under State and Federal laws, Good Shepherd only recognizes dogs as service animals under this policy.
* Service animals must always be under control and should not pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
* Service animals must comply with state and local animal control laws.
* Service animals should be kept at a person’s side quietly unless they are performing a specific task.
* Service animals must be leashed, harnessed, or tethered unless this may interfere with the service animals’ work or if a disability prevents using them. In those cases, service animals still need to be controlled through voice, hand signals, or another effective way.

Animals in the Church

* Service animals are welcome in the Church during religious services when accompanied by their owner. However, the owner may be asked to remove the service animal if it becomes disruptive.
* Emotional support animals are generally not allowed in the Church during religious services. However, exceptions may be made by the Rector.
* Pet animals are not allowed in the Church during religious services.

Animals in Ballenger Hall

* Service animals are welcome in Ballenger Hall when accompanied by their owner. They are not allowed in the kitchen when food is being prepared or served.
* Emotional support and pet animals are not allowed in Ballenger Hall during Church-sponsored activities (e.g., Coffee Hours, Christian Education events, meal events, etc.). Exceptions may be made by the Rector or Senior Warden.
* Whenever animals are allowed in Ballenger Hall, special care must be taken by the animal’s owner to keep the animal away from food preparation and service activities. It is also expected the owner will recognize that some individuals may have adverse emotions towards animals and will keep the animal away from those individuals.
* Animals are not allowed on tables, chairs, or other furniture.

Animals on Good Shepherd’s Grounds

* Animals are welcome on Good Shepherd’s grounds when accompanied by their owner. Animals should be on a leash or under appropriate control.
* Animal owners are responsible for cleaning up after their animals.