

Saint Philips Chapel Street Policy on Animals in Sunday Worship



This policy outlines the approach of Saint Philips Chapel Street regarding the presence of pets and other animals during Sunday worship. While we recognize the importance of inclusivity and community, it is necessary to balance this with the needs of the congregation, the sanctity of worship, and practical considerations.

Policy Statement

Animals, with certain exceptions, are not permitted inside the church building during Sunday Worship. This policy is intended to ensure an environment conducive to reverence, focus, and safety during services. Public worship is a time for prayer, reflection, and focus. The presence of animals may cause distractions for congregants and clergy.

Exceptions

1. Service Animals: Guide dogs, hearing dogs, and other registered assistance animals are always welcome. These animals provide essential support to their handlers and are exempt from this restriction.
2. Animal Blessing Services: Pets and other well-trained animals are welcome during specific services, such as a Blessing of the Animals. These events will be advertised in advance.

Enforcement

- Notices will be displayed at entrances to inform congregants and visitors of this policy.
- Churchwardens and the welcome team will kindly but firmly remind attendees of the restriction.
- Individuals who bring animals will be invited to leave them in a suitable location outside the building.
- Individuals who insist on bringing animals into Sunday worship will be considered disruptive and asked to leave; if they still refuse we reserve the right to call the police to ask them to be removed.

Pastoral Considerations

We recognize that some members of the congregation may be disappointed by this policy. The clergy and pastoral team are available to discuss individual concerns and explore reasonable accommodations where possible.

Review and Feedback

This policy will be reviewed when appropriate by the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Feedback from the congregation is welcome and will be considered during the review process.

Approved by the PCC on 18th November 2024

Signed:

Date: 20/11/2024