



Elements of Unitarian Universalist Websites welcoming people with disabilities

Accessibility online not only comprises how your location and worship service are accessible but the way in which your website itself is accessible. Below are some ideas of information that you can include on your website for people with disabilities. **While this list may not be complete, it is rather extensive. Please do what you can wherever applicable.**

When people first come to your website, they typically land on your ‘home’ page where there is an introduction to your church and congregation. Your church’s welcome message should explicitly include your congregation’s commitment to fully including and embracing people with disabilities in the life of the congregation.

With the overall look and function of your website, we recommend starting with a ‘what to expect’ type of page. List ways that your building, grounds, and programs are accessible. Such as:

The screenshot shows the website for the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Rochester, Minnesota. A navigation menu is open, highlighting the 'ACCESSIBILITY' option. The page content includes a section titled 'Accessibility and Accommodations' with text describing building access and a 'Parking:' section listing designated accessible spaces.

Items you may include about your:

Please list what types of services you offer and where someone could go to get them or information on them. Please provide contact information and links for more information whenever it is possible.

Building and Grounds:

- Map and written description of location of the accessible parking spaces with the location of entrances into the building.
- A way-finder map of the building with written descriptions of location that shows how to navigate the interior building, including where there may be automatic doors and elevators, accessible bathrooms, bathrooms that would accommodate an attendant, transgender bathrooms, and accessible seating in the sanctuary.
- Map with written description of the grounds with accessible paths and doors.
- Information about public transportation to the building; including information on carpools.
- Posting maps may not be possible; describe how someone can locate the above information once they arrive onsite.

Accommodations:

- Loop system or hearing devices, captioning, or sign language interpretation.
- Large print or electronic Orders of Service.
- Braille signage and hymnals.
- Chairs with arms in the Sanctuary, classrooms, or other common areas to provide support for rising from a seated position, accessible coat racks, or handrails in various areas of your building.
- Virtual service links, electronic Order of Service, and location of past services.
- Please note if a portable microphone is available for events.
- Include any other accommodations provided to include people with disabilities in congregational life.

Programs & Services

- Include information about RE and what children with disabilities and their parents or caregivers can expect. Include links to other pages for further information.
- Include information on Pastoral Care and other services available.
- List any support groups and link (if applicable) to their pages such as: AA, AI-Anon, NAMI, grief groups, or groups for people with mental health issues or disorders such as depression.
- Include information on your church's policies regarding:
 - Service animals
 - Chemical Sensitivity
 - Food allergies
 - Emergency Procedure

Website Accessibility:

Website accessibility is a technical fix to a website that allows people who use assistive technology to access the information. If you have a website guru that can work on making your website functionally more accessible, here are links to some guidelines provided by the UUA: <http://www.uua.org/communications/websites/accessibility> and <https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/accessible-website>.

Additional Information for your Website:

- Link to EqUUal Access' webpage, <http://www.equalaccess.org/>, with explanation of what EqUUal Access is.
- Your website should include "page last updated" dates on each webpage so that a visitor knows that the information they are viewing is the most current and up to date (this is a good rule of thumb for all websites). The date doesn't necessarily indicate that a change has been made, only that someone verified that the information is still accurate.

Do you have other ideas that we should add? Please let us know, we'd like to share your ideas with other congregations! Please send suggestions to shellyrohe@gmail.com. If you would like further recommendations for a second page on your website, send me that message as well.