



Including ALL,  
Changing Attitudes

## Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry Program is Underway



The Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM) Program officially began in June of 2015. The purpose of the program is to certify UU congregations as committed and engaged in becoming accessible and inclusive religious communities. Currently, there are six congregations that have formally enrolled in the program in addition to six more congregations that were a part of our field test program. The Unitarian Universalist Society of Ann Arbor was the first congregation that completed the program. When a congregation signs up to begin this process, we assign an AIM Review Team to guide the congregation through the process and be available for questions and advice. The process typically takes about 3 years depending on the details in the plan for improving accessibility and inclusion that is prepared by the congregation.

As the program is being implemented, we have kept careful focus on any potential problem areas, and are making changes and clarifications that we deem necessary.

All of the materials for the program are available on the UUA's web site at: [www.uua.org/accessibility/aim](http://www.uua.org/accessibility/aim). To get started, you can look there to see what is required. For any questions, please contact the AIM Administrator Michelle Avery Ferguson at [aim@uua.org](mailto:aim@uua.org).

### SECOND ANNUAL EQUUAL ACCESS SERMON CONTEST!

We are pleased to announce the 2017 EqUUAal Access Sermon Contest. Sermons on disability-related social justice, the experience of disability, or any other topic related to disability will be considered.

To be eligible, the sermon must be preached by April 30, 2017. The winner will be announced at General Assembly in New Orleans and will receive a \$500 award. Both clergy and lay-preachers are encouraged to participate.

#### How to enter:

Submit in MS Word or Plain Text.  
(PDF not acceptable.) Email to [info@EqUUAalAccess.org](mailto:info@EqUUAalAccess.org) with the subject line "EqUUAal Access Sermon Contest".

#### Include Two Items (separate documents)

1. A cover page, which has your name, address, phone number, email address, sermon title, congregation to whom the sermon was delivered, and date the sermon was delivered. Be sure to indicate this is for the Sermon Contest.
2. Your sermon with title, from which any identifying information has been taken out (name, congregation).

Entries must be submitted by May 6,  
2017.

New to us? Check out our website

<http://www.equalaccess.org/>



**EQUAL  
ACCESS  
CANADA**

Here's an update from our UU friends up north: Many of Canada's 50 UU churches and Fellowships are busy snapping images that reflect congregational life and disability, inclusion, and accessibility. These pictures will be collated into a special video to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities (Dec. 3). Watch for the results on social media and EA's website!

Canada has distinct federal and provincial laws and policies around service animals that differ somewhat from those that apply to the United States. Therefore, a companion Canadian version of the Service Animal Policy document will be released in the spring to coincide with the policy described in the accompanying article. (See "Policy on Service Animals Coming Soon")

Reported by Rev. Helen McFadyen, Consultant for International Liaison, Minister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Kamloops, BC

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## Policy on Service Animals Coming Soon

It's estimated that between 15,000 and 20,000 Americans utilize service animals. And yet, many find bringing a service animal to a congregation can be a challenge. Congregations aren't aware of regulations and best practices surrounding service animals, and handlers often feel singled out, criticized and unwelcomed. That's why, a year ago, Rev. Helen McFadyen, Carol Agate, and Meredith Plummer began working on a Service Animal policy for the UUA's Congregational Life office. "When a Service Animal Comes to Church," will help congregations answer such questions as "May I ask for papers to ensure the dog is a service animal?" and "What if other members have dog allergies?" Look for the publication in the spring of 2017.



## We're Looking for a Few Good People

Would you like to increase your involvement with Equal Access in 2017? There are a number of ways you can do that. Here are some examples.

- We currently have a few openings on our Board of Directors. The Board oversees the organization's direction, planning, activities and resources and generally meets monthly, primarily by web conference.
- Participate in a task force or start a new task force.
- Volunteer to work on materials and electronic media.
- Participate in the planning and staffing of activities at General Assembly 2017 in New Orleans. This can range from pre-planning for materials to staffing of the Equal Access booth in Exhibit Hall.

If you would like to learn more, please contact us at [info@equalaccess.org](mailto:info@equalaccess.org)