

Glossbrenner Church Dog Policy

“All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful, the good Lord made them all.” With that poem, James Herriot recognized the marvelous creativity of God and celebrated his wonderful creatures, about whom God pronounced them good. At Glossbrenner, we also celebrate God’s creatures, but we are reminded of the Apostle Paul who warned the Corinthian church that, regarding worship, “everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” (1 Corinthians 14:40 NIV)

To that end, we realize that we cannot open our doors to all of God’s creatures. We do, however, recognize the great value of working dogs and the many benefits they provide for humans of every size, shape and stage in life. The term “working dogs” will include, but is not limited to service dogs, emotional support dogs, therapy dogs, and those same dogs that are in training. The unqualified love and devotion they show should be an inspiration to all Christians.

- **Service dogs** are specially trained and then placed with a person to recognize medical conditions and perform tasks for that person only. Service dogs may not be petted while working as they need to remain focused on that person. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects the rights of people with disabilities to be accompanied by their service dogs in public places. Although churches are exempt from the provisions of the ADA, many faith-based organizations choose to comply with the ADA.
- An **emotional support dog (ESA)** provides therapeutic support to a patient with a disabling mental illness. ESAs are not trained to perform tasks or recognize symptoms but are distinguished by the close, emotional, and supportive bond between the animal and that person. ESAs are protected under the Fair Housing Act and Air Carrier Access Act.
- **Therapy dogs** also go through training, such as through Keystone Pet Enhanced Therapy Services (KPETS), but it is much different than that of a service dog. Therapy dogs are encouraged to interact with people and are trained to behave in a public setting. They often visit hospitals, nursing homes, and schools to provide love and support for those who need it.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Glossbrenner Dog Policy does not only tolerate these types of working dogs but celebrates them. Working dogs and their humans are welcome in our fellowship at all venues in keeping with public health practices and in accord with their approved duties. Handlers are required to keep their certification current with their licensing agencies and are reminded to remove the animal if it becomes disruptive to the “fitting and orderly way of worship.” Glossbrenner may request the handler or owner to remove an animal at any time if deemed necessary.

This policy was created in accordance with the District Superintendent’s direction and adopted on December 9, 2021, by the Administrative Board.