



## The Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea Pet Policy

The community of Bethesda-by-the-Sea has always had a special love for animals. In fact, we have considered the precious pets of our parishioners as a unique and special part of our beloved community. One of the highlights for Bethesda each year is the annual Blessing of the Animals service, which takes place annually in the fall.

In 2022, the leadership of Bethesda determined it was in the best interest of the entire parish to publish our revised guidelines and expectations pertaining to pets on campus. After reviewing, and evaluating, what we had in place regarding this matter, which included conversations with our insurance carriers, etc., we determined it was best for us to make several modifications to our policies and procedures. The changes that were made not only to allow our pets to remain a part of the Bethesda community, but to do so without creating a disturbance for others as they attend and worship here at Bethesda.

The Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea holds to the following guidelines, procedures, and expectations, regarding pets on campus. Except for well-behaved, non-aggressive, registered service dogs, these guidelines, procedures, and expectations apply to all animals on Bethesda's campus.

- Pets brought onto the Bethesda campus must be always under the owner's complete control. This is defined as having the pet on a leash, in a satchel, carrier, etc.
- Owners are required to clean up after their pet.
- Pets are prohibited from locations where food is being served, as well as from being in attendance for small group gatherings and committee meetings.
- Owners wishing to bring their pet into a church service must sit in the back of the church with their pet and keep their pet in their carrier for the entire service.
- Bethesda allows one pet, per owner, to be brought into the church service.
- Pets may not be brought to the altar during the service.

*Updated September 2023*