



BELLARMINE CHAPEL

Bellarmino Chapel Accessibility Review

All Abilities Team - 2022

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Background

While Bellarmine is not legally required to conform to ADA accessibility requirements, it is an ethical and moral duty to consider ADA requirements, including reasonable accommodations now and in future planning.

The original scope of this review was to identify physical barriers to accessibility in the chapel building. This review is summarized in Appendix C for the Finance Committee to be used as part of the annual chapel “walk-through” process scheduled for May 2022.

Accessibility is a far greater issue than building barriers and accommodations; it requires provisions for individuals with disabilities across a wide spectrum of physical, mental, social and emotional challenges to participate fully in sacramental attendance and ministries, including, and particularly, the celebration of the Mass.

Church Teaching on Persons with Disabilities

U.S. Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities – Direct Quotes

- Recognizing that persons with disabilities have a claim to our respect because they are persons, because they share in the one redemption of Christ, and because they contribute to our society by their activity within it, the Church must become an advocate for and with them
- Ministers working in the apostolate for the disabled should treat them as a uniquely valuable resource for understanding the various needs of those they serve
- When we think of persons with disabilities in relation to ministry, we tend automatically to think of doing something for them. We do not reflect that they can do something for us and with us. As noted above, persons with disabilities can, by their example, teach the able-bodied much about strength and Christian acceptance
- Accessibility involves far more than physical alterations to parish buildings. Realistic provision must be made for persons with disabilities to participate fully in the eucharist and other liturgical celebrations such as the sacraments of reconciliation, confirmation, and anointing of the sick

Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities – Direct Quotes

- Catholics with disabilities have a right to participate in the sacraments as fully as other members of the local ecclesial community
- Persons with disabilities, like all other parishioners, should be encouraged to participate in all levels of pastoral ministry that are available and for which they are qualified
- When baptized Catholics who have been regular communicants develop advanced Alzheimer’s or other age-related dementias, there is to be a presumption in favor of the individual’s ability to distinguish between Holy Communion and regular food. Holy Communion should continue to be offered as long as possible.

Note: for detailed guidance on specific sacramental considerations for people with disabilities, see the document sections on Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Marriage, and Anointing of the Sick

All Abilities Walkthrough Notes - March 13th, 2022

Attending the Mass and walkthrough were Joe and Maria Link, Dana Metcalf, Bill Ritter, Mary Sarah Kirley from Marjorie Book Continuing Education (MBCE), Dennis Kirley, Tim Severyn and Mary Stutler. Results reflect the experiences of Catholic and non-Catholic review participants with and without disabilities.

The review did not include any facilities other than the chapel, such as the parish center, other Xavier buildings used for parish functions, or the space used for parish retreats at Milford.

Appendix C is a separate, internal review of basic Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and chapel compliance. Note that the church is not legally required to address any of these ADA regulations.

Attending Mass

- What Maria and Bill and in fact the whole group noted was that it is a very welcoming congregation
- Maria noted that there were several people in wheelchairs coming in for the 11:30 mass as well as parents with children in strollers and felt that that was another indication of Bellarmine being a welcoming community. She also saw the child friendly layout in the Narthex was good, easily spotted and allowing parents to sit close by
- A parking permit was provided in advance, and they had no parking issues. See final section for other parking notes
- On entering the chapel Dana, being blind, was at first unable to find the switch between the doors to because there were other plates on the wall nearby. After attending mass once this would not be an issue
- Dana really liked the fact that there were no steps, and he had no issues with the restrooms Maria noted that sometimes individuals with other disabilities prefer the standard restroom stalls but would not be an issue
- The door from the Chapel to the Narthex is very heavy and awkward so when it is closed it was very difficult for Dana to open. This is also the case for someone on crutches. If someone is posted or available during mass this would eliminate the problem since those doors are normally only closed during mass
- Both Bill and Maria commented that homilies are very important and noted that humor or personal anecdotes help. At this mass, the celebrant did not incorporate either. Bill found the sermon very dry so that his thoughts drifted
- Bill thought that the Bellarmine layout was very similar to his parent's church in Dayton and the music was also. He really liked our music (and there were only a few singers that day – not as good as usual). He currently attends St Cecilia and there is only vocal music, no instruments - piano or organ
- The pews unattached to the floor are a plus and minus. The plus is that they are easily moved and can be adjusted to accommodate special needs. The bad is that the pews slide with people in the group getting up and sitting down.
- A suggestion was made that rubber feet or some other modification might be attached to the bottom of the pews, so they do not slide as easily but still be moved when needed
 - Note: Prior to the walk through, another parishioner identified the same issue, resulting in very narrow pew spaces from week to week
 - Moving some of the pews and some of the chairs out has helped a great deal so that now there are several places for a wheelchair or scooter with seating immediately to the left/right for a companion
- The pews and kneelers were easy to raise and lower and use otherwise
- Both Bill and Maria are Catholic and had no issues going up to communion on the left side of the chapel, although the flow was a little confusing

Observations During Mass

- The far-right aisle is very narrow and because it's part of the communion flow this is especially awkward for anyone with mobility issues. This is currently an issue with powered scooters, forcing them to return in the other aisle on the right. The wheelchair could even not go down the aisle
- There was an announcement of the songs by number, but only the entrance and concluding hymns. There is no song board that lists out what songs would be sung. The worship aid didn't necessarily help if you were not familiar with the multiple song books that are used. None of the songbooks or worship aids are either large print or Braille at present
- Maria indicated that braille is much less common but per Dana Clovernook is the second largest publisher of Braille books and documentation in the country
- Dana, who is not Catholic, had no indication of when to stand or sit and things like the RCIA announcement were very confusing because if you're not Catholic you wouldn't even know what the acronym stands for or what it is. There were some awkward pauses where if you couldn't see you wouldn't know what was going on

Walk Through After Mass

- Most of the Chapel is accessible with minor modifications, including the Narthex, Sacristy and small chapel
- Dana was able to use the men's room without issue
- While the sanctuary is accessible using the right ramp, the left ramp is blocked by the organ. Per Fr. Eric, this can be moved if necessary. In any case, the ramp to the right is accessible. The cloth draped on the cross was low hanging, such that someone blind or in a chair or both might not see or perhaps not avoid it, as happened with Dana
- Adjusting the lectern microphone to a usable position was challenging for someone in a chair. Wireless mics could alleviate this
- Participating in the choir did not appear to be a problem
- Much as some pews and chairs have been moved/removed in the main chapel, the small chapel could be made more accessible with a few chairs removed at the entrance to allow for a wheelchair
- We were not able to evaluate other liturgies, sacraments and events held in the chapel, but many of the same comments would be true

Recommendations

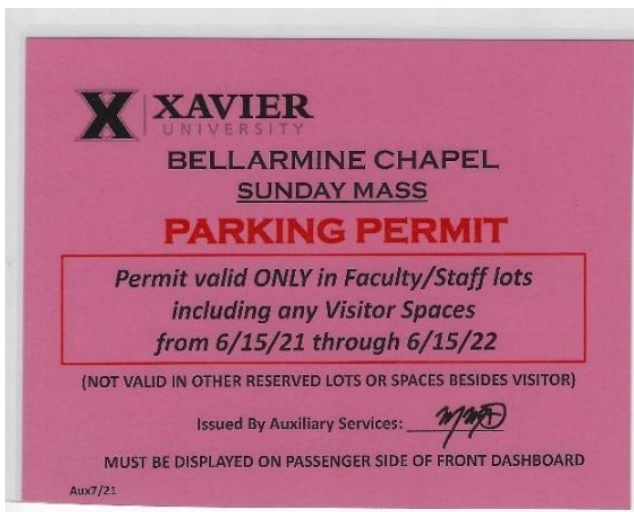
- Present results to the Advisory Committee for review
- Consider options to make the glass Narthex doors easier to open, either physical modification or process change, e.g., someone is posted or available during Mass (**note: facilities barrier**)
- Review accessibility of Mass ministries and other chapel liturgies and events for accessibility - Request the Worship Committee evaluate participation various ministries by individuals with disabilities and consider possible accommodations if not
- Review the communion flow to better support individuals with visual or mobility issues and address the very narrow far right aisle
- Consider asking the celebrant to announce what is going on "next" during the Mass can help those who are not Catholic or those who might have a disability. This includes specifically saying "Please stand", etc.
- Consider posting a song board since hymns are sometimes announced for the first hymn only
- Make copies of braille and large print hymnals and other printed materials available to be offered by greeters
- Label the collection boxes to identify them for blind and non-readers
- Provide materials to staff, ministry leaders and parishioners to create awareness and sensitivity. See list at end of this document, especially *That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities*
- Market the All-Abilities mission and events (especially the MBCE play in the chapel on August 12) to increase parishioner awareness and participation

Website Accessibility Notes

- While the website is out of the scope of this review, the group did provide input for the review planned for this summer.
- Should include information for those who want to learn chapel accessibility and available accommodations are/are not available for individuals with disabilities
- Website design should follow international standards available at: [WCAG 2.1 at a Glance | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)
- Joe noted that MBCE paid someone to do the MBCE design following standards, but even when they did, it has not always succeeded addressing web accessibility
- Dana belongs to a larger group of blind individuals, and they have done testing on website accessibility and should be consulted for end user website evaluation and accessibility testing.

Appendix A: Parking

- In practice, the parking situation is fairly good and there are no accessibility issues.
- No spaces in the circle drive are marked as handicapped, although there are designated spaces in the Husman lot - an estimated 200 yards from the chapel
- In an informal check of cars parked in the circle drive, only one had the permit required in the Bulletin. One car had no permit, plate or placard. The others had either plate or placard.
- The permit limits parking to Faculty/Staff lots including visitor spaces. It does not mention the circle drive at all – see below



Appendix B: Reference Material

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

[Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities](#)

[Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities](#)

- Note the *Parish Level* section beginning on page 5

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

[Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition \(AAPD\)](#)

[That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities](#)

An excellent, actionable guide to welcome and support individuals with a disability – very valuable as reference for orientation and training to welcome people with All Abilities

[History of the Disability Rights Movement and ADA](#)

Marjorie Book Continuing Education (MBCE)

[Marjorie Book | Continuing Education Society](#)

Marjorie Book Continuing Education provides inclusive experiences among people of all abilities through continuing education, service and theater

Bellarmine Chapel All Abilities Team is partnering with MBCE in 2022 to help raise awareness and to perform a play in the Chapel on August 12th, 2022

[ADA Website](#)

[ADA course on Reaching Out to Individuals with Disabilities](#)

Explains ADA requirements for businesses/organizations in a brief 10-lesson online course

[An ADA Primer for Small Business](#)

Provides ADA 2010 Update and Simplified Small Business Regulation Review

Appendix C: ADA Standards – Chapel Facilities Review

ADA Categories	ADA Requirement /Recommended Standards	Chapel Current State	Meet Standards?	Notes
Handicap Passenger Loading/Unloading Zone		Circle Drive provides accessible access	Yes	Metro Access vans should have adequate, possibly dedicated space for drop off and pick up. Bellarmine issues special placard for Circle Drive parking
Number of Designated Handicap Parking Spaces	See Handicap Parking Guidelines table below	Four accessible spaces in Husman Lot (not close). Unclear since number of available spaces for Chapel in total is unclear	Yes	Counting the Circle Drive, though not marked or designated (signage and lane/space marking)

ADA Categories	ADA Requirement /Recommended Standards	Chapel Current State	Meet Standards?	Notes
Handicap Parking space size, access and signage requirements	See Handicap Parking Guidelines table below	Unclear since number of available spaces for Chapel in total is unclear	Yes	Counting the Circle Drive, though not marked or designated (signage and lane/space marking)
Main Chapel Entry	32" wide, automatic doors - ground level entry	Width and automatic doors meet standards 35 inches	Yes	
Drinking Fountain Height and Underneath Clearance		33"	Yes	
Bathrooms - door and light switch	Switch height requirements 54" in 1991, 48" 2010 revision	33" high light switch	Yes	
Stalls				
Overall Size		34" narrow point 50" widest	Yes	
Door		33" opens out	Yes	
Raised Toilet Seat		18" high, 34" clearance to wall	Yes	
Grab bars		Yes side and back of toilet	Yes	
Sink				
Height /depth, lever type faucet		34" high, 21" deep	Yes	
Drainpipe Insulation Needed?		Pipes are Covered by Panel	Yes	
Towel/Hand Dryer Access		47" towel dispenser, Soap dispenser, sink 44" soap in men's is 10" high on back wall, but side mount in women's bathroom - better arrangement	Yes?	45"- soap in Women's. Should consider moving soap in men's from back to side wall as in Women's for easier access
Door from/to Narthex - required force	5 pounds	Requires substantial strength/force to open.	No	Unable to measure precisely , but clearly exceeds standard - question of when and whether to leave open or assistance when not open
Aisle Width -Main, side, front, rear		91" main, far right 27", sound board 28"	Partial	Far right aisle is very narrow 27"
Accommodate Crutches, Canes and Walkers,	32" minimum aisle width 36" inches in	32" in all but far right aisle	Yes with note	Far right aisle does not meet standard. Others meet 32 " but I do not think

ADA Categories	ADA Requirement /Recommended Standards	Chapel Current State	Meet Standards?	Notes
Wheelchairs and Power-Driven Devices, including:	a commercial building)			we would be designated a commercial building
<i>Standard size wheelchairs</i>			Yes with note	
<i>Compact wheelchairs</i>			Yes with note	
<i>Powered</i>			Yes with note	
<i>Scooters</i>			Yes with note	
<i>Seqways</i>			Yes with note	Provided not a safety risk
<i>Walkers</i>			Yes with note	
<i>Crutches</i>			Yes with note	
<i>Golf Cars</i>			Yes with note	Provided not a safety risk
Width of Wheelchair Spaces	36" If spaces side by side, 33" each Width depends on means of access - 48-60" See diagram below	Where pews moved/removed , appears to meet including caregiver in adjacent pew	Yes, but few chapel location choices/options	Some provided currently after floor reseal, consider more and varies locations
Assistive Listening Systems and Devices	Number of receivers that must be provided depending on the number of seats (4% rule).	Some Assisted listening devices available	Yes?	Not sure of device Type or number of units available (10?). Chapel only or other gathering/meeting spaces? Ask Tim.
Contacting Parish Staff, volunteers, etc.	ADA Provides free relay Network for TTY/Text Messaging	Unsure if needed or used per Tim S.	N/A	Not required but could be a valuable Ask Tim if aware or staff have used. See ADA network description below
Ramp Behind Altar - Ramp Length to Height Ratio of Steps	Each 1" of step height requires 1' of ramp length, handrail	Step is 7" high with 84" long ramp, opening to altar	Yes	60" opening from ramp to altar, but 40" around cross. Only 2' wide entry to the ramp on the left side past organ - organ can be moved per Fr. Eric
Accommodate Service Animals	Allow Service animals based on definition and limitations described below	No formal policy or procedure or designated spaces	No	See definition and exclusion of service animal categories below. A matter of stated policy, not any current restrictions.
Provide Sign Language or other hearing support - Assistive listening	No specific requirement	ASL Not provided	?	ALDs available

ADA Categories	ADA Requirement /Recommended Standards	Chapel Current State	Meet Standards?	Notes
may not be adequate or enough devices (rule of thumb -4% of number of seats.)				
Misc. Notes				
Lectern	Non-ADA consideration - N/A	43" to 46" high	N/A	
Front row Chairs on left side just 1 foot in front of pew	Pew spacing - non-ADA	Pew spacing generally 16" but some smaller (13"). Chairs on left front only 12" from first pew for some reason		MBCE experts during their walk through did not see issues
Pews not anchored to floor	Pew use- non-ADA	Parishioners not familiar with this sometimes tip backwards		MBCE Review - The pews unattached to the floor are a plus and minus. The plus is that they easily moved and can be adjusted to accommodate special needs. The bad is that the pews slide with people in the group getting up and sitting down.

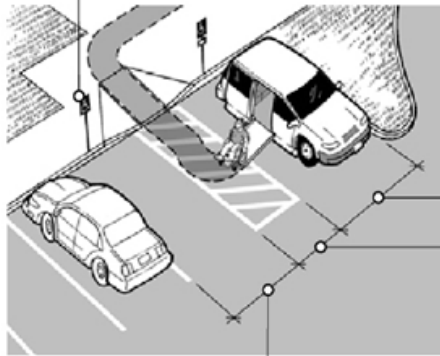
Key resource used in defining and compiling this information is **ADA Update: A Primer for Small Business** from US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section

Handicap Parking Guidelines

Total Number of Parking Spaces Provided in Parking Facility	Minimum Number of Required Accessible Parking Spaces
1 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 75	3
76 to 100	4
101 to 150	5
151 to 200	6
201 to 300	7
301 to 400	8
401 to 500	9
501 to 1000	2 percent of total
1001 and over	20, plus 1 for each 100, or fraction thereof, over 1000

Signage: international symbol of accessibility placed in front of the parking space mounted at least 60 inches above the ground, measured to the bottom of the sign. Van accessible spaces include the designation "van accessible."

Van Accessible Spaces: 2010 Standards—one for every six accessible spaces (1991 Standards required one for every eight)



Width of space for car: 8 feet minimum

Width of space for van: 11 feet minimum (although it may be 8 feet wide if its access aisle is 8 feet wide)

Access aisle:
Width: 5 feet minimum (if aisle serves car and van spaces)
Length: full length of parking space

Wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, cane

Power-Driven devices:

Standard

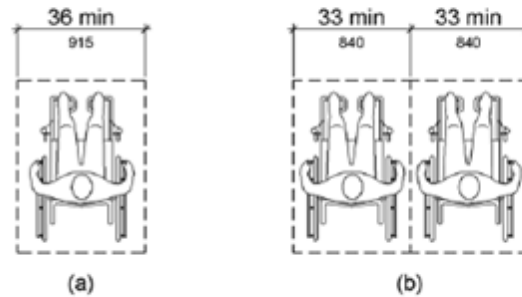
Compact

Powered

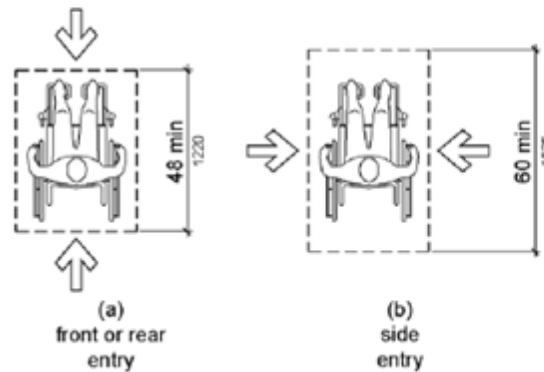
Scooters

Seqways *

Golf Cars *



* Provided not a safety risk



Service Animals

A clear policy permitting service animals can help ensure that staff are aware of their obligation to allow access to parishioners using service animals.

Under the ADA's revised regulations, the definition of "service animal" is limited to a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Under the ADA, "comfort," "therapy," or "emotional support" animals do not meet the definition of a service animal.

Appendix D: Sacrament Attendance and Participation - Accessibility Review

Sacrament Attendance and Participation	Physical/Mental Challenge				Potential Remediation(s)				Notes
	"Invisible" Issues e.g. Mental Limitations, Disease, Other	Mobility Challenges	Low/No Vision	Non-reader	Structural - Capital Improvements	Minor Physical Modification or Accommodation	Policy Procedure Practice	Training	
Mass Participation									
Transportation to Bellarmine									None provided
Parking and Chapel Entrance						X			Handicap parking available in Circle Drive but not marked. Marked spaces are far away. Consider temporary signage to block off section
Enter Chapel from Narthex (required force to open door)	X	X	X	X			X	X	A structural modification to the door(s) is possible but prohibitively expensive
Provided Facilities Use									
Bathrooms - Stall size, toilet height, sink height, Faucet, pipe wrap									Suggest that Men's room soap location be same as women's - on the side wall
Drinking Fountain									
Seat availability and Selection									Pews have been removed/moved to provide wheel chair spaces, including companion
Sanctuary Access									Ramp is available
Pew/Kneeler Use - raise, lower, in out									
Participation	X	X	X	X			X	X	No worship aids, hymnals are currently available
Greeting of Peace									
Receiving Communion	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	Flow of communion reception is confusing and even difficult access accessible on the far right side - aisle too narrow
Navigate to the Narthex (door force)									Doors open after Mass
Navigate through the Narthex									Crowds after mass can make movement in the Narthex difficult. Setup varies week to week
Sign ups for special ministries including sign itself									
After mass social participation									
Exit to Transportation									
Return Transportation Home									Same comment as on parking above

	Physical/Mental Challenge				Potential Remediation(s)				Notes
	"Invisible" Issues e.g. Mental Limitations, Disease, Other	Mobility Challenges	Low/No Vision	Non-reader	Structural - Capital Improvements	Minor Physical Modification or Accommodation	Policy Procedure Practice	Training	

Small Chapel									
Entrance and Seating		X	X			X	X		Can remove 2 chairs at entrance to right side to make space for wheelchair
Subset of Mass Participation and Ministries listed above									
Mass Ministries									
Greeter							X	X	
Children's Liturgy									Unable to test during initial walkthrough
Baby Sitting									Unable to test during initial walkthrough
Sound Board									Unable to test during initial walkthrough
Livestream Tech									Unable to test during initial walkthrough
Musician									Space and setup should allow for singer
Acolyte									
Lector							X	X	Tested accessibility. Microphone may not be adjustable enough but wireless mics are available
Eucharistic Minister									Unable to test during initial walkthrough
Usher/Collections									Unable to test during initial walkthrough
Ad Hoc Assistance to Other Parishioners									Unable to test during initial walkthrough

	Physical/Mental Challenge				Potential Remediation(s)				Notes
	"Invisible" Issues e.g. Mental Limitations, Disease, Other	Mobility Challenges	Low/No Vision	Non-reader	Structural - Capital Improvements	Minor Physical Modification or Accommodation	Policy Procedure Practice	Training	
Sacrament Attendance and Participation									

Other Events/Liturgies/Sacraments									
Baptism									Unable to test during initial walkthrough but expect same results as above
Confession/Reconciliation									Unable to test during initial walkthrough but expect same results as above
Confirmation									Unable to test during initial walkthrough but expect same results as above
Matrimony									Unable to test during initial walkthrough but expect same results as above. Weddings can introduce special challenges per one parishioner's' experience. See notes below
Sacrament of the Sick									Unable to test during initial walkthrough but expect same results as above
Other Parish Events									Live streaming or Zoom meetings are normally accessible
Prayer Services									Unable to Test - see note above
Retreat or Presentations									Unable to Test - see note above
Small group meetings e.g. faith sharing meetings									Unable to Test - see note above
									Unable to Test - see note above

Note: - designation indicated by an 'X' is a potential issue or barrier, not necessarily true in all cases

All the above are relative to accessibility of existing liturgies and programs. They do not address opportunities for creation or customization such as sensory friendly Masses to support unique liturgical celebrations, targeting a variety of special needs