

Base Chapel. FAC: 7361

CATCODE: 730771

OPR: AF/HC

OCR: N/A

Updated: August 2024

1.1. **Description.** These facilities provide spaces for community worship, individual meditation, pastoral counseling, spiritual support, interpersonal relationships, religious guidance, and related functions.

1.2. **Requirements Determination.** The number of chapels at an installation, as well as the size of each chapel, is based upon the full-time military officer Chaplain Corps manpower staffing assigned to the entire installation.

- Small size bases are defined as those having up to 6 full-time (does not include IMAs) military Officer Chaplain Corps personnel assigned. Small bases typically are configured as a “Chapel Center” where a single small chapel with attached Religious Education Facilities are combined.
- Medium size bases are defined as those having up to 6-12 full-time (does not include IMAs) military Officer Chaplain Corps personnel assigned. Medium bases typically have one large chapel and either an attached or separate small or large Religious Education Facility.
- Large size bases are defined as those having 12 or more full-time (does not include IMAs) military Officer Chaplain Corps personnel assigned. Large bases typically have both a large and small chapel and an appropriate mix of religious education facilities to support both chapels.

1.2.1. Chaplains and Religious Affairs personnel assigned to the installation are generally provided their administrative office space at the Chapel Center or Base Chapel. Those that are assigned (“embedded”) in a unit are authorized office space with that unit. Personnel should typically only be authorized one office space at the installation.

1.2.2. Facility needs and sizing are also influenced by the number of military personnel assigned to or residing at the installation, the percentage of the installation’s population residing in civilian communities (CONUS only), the availability and/or utilization of off-base local community religious facilities; as well as family members and civilian personnel dependent upon the installation for religious support. Faiths and denominations to be served, attendance trends, and projected changes in the installation population and mission are also relevant in the chapel planning process, as well as determining unique requirements.

1.2.3. The worship center spaces should dominate the image of the facility. These spaces are primarily religious in nature and must meet specific requirements to accommodate the interdenominational uses of the facility. Because of their multi-faith use, these facilities must be religiously neutral in design, as well as flexible in their programming. Care must be taken to avoid using fixed architecture associated with specific religious groups. Liturgical furnishings specific to individual faith groups must therefore be moveable and the architectural form, images, and permanent ornamentation acceptable to all users.

1.2.4. Religious facilities should be constructed with all appropriate safety and accessibility features required of Air Force facilities.

1.3. Specific religious terms have been used to describe some of the spaces within the worship center. The following definitions are provided to ensure a generic understanding of these spaces:

1.3.1. The **Narthex** is a public gathering space used by people prior to attending services held in either the sanctuary or the multi-faith worship center.

1.3.2. The **Sanctuary** is the primary space used for traditional religious worship services and consists of two distinct areas: The **Chancel** and the **Nave**. The Chancel is where the religious service is conducted, and contains such elements as a baptistry, a choir loft, the altar, and a podium. The Nave is where the congregation sits to view and participate in the service.

1.3.3. The **Multi-Faith Worship Center** is used for less conventional religious services that require a more open space for the congregation.

1.3.4. The **Blessed Sacrament Room** is a small, intimate worship space where personal services for individual members of the congregation are held. This room is required to support Catholic religious services at all chapels.

1.3.5. The **Sacristy** is a room where the chaplain prepares for services in the sanctuary. Storage is provided for religious articles to be used by chaplains from different religious faiths.

1.4. **Scope Determination. Table 1 Base Chapel Space Criteria** defines the space criteria for small and large chapels. Mission-specific and unique chapel facility spatial requirements may be justified according to local installation needs. The various programmed spaces can be grouped into two areas with similar functions: the worship center and the administrative spaces. See *AFI 52-101, Chaplain Planning and Organizing (15 July 2019)* for additional guidance. In addition, see **CATCODE (CC) 730772 - Religious Education Facility, CC 730773 - Chapel Center, and CC 730774 - Hospital Chapel** for criteria specific to those facilities.

1.5. **Dimensions.** Most chapels are constructed with a seating capacity of approximately 300, and typically it is not recommended that a chapel exceed 400 seats. Requirements for larger or smaller chapels may be established by validated local needs. Table 1 contains recommended Chapel space dimensions for small or large size facilities.

1.5.1. If there is not a separate Religious education facility a kitchen and small conference room may be added

1.6. **Design Considerations.**

1.6.1. Provide reasonable separation of meeting and worship areas to enable simultaneous activities to occur, such as the conduct of worship services, pastoral counseling, etc.

1.6.2. Office space must be arranged to facilitate counseling and protect the clergy-parishioner relationship. Privileged communication requires both visual and acoustical confidentiality (see *AFI 52-101* and *UCMJ Rules of Evidence, Rule 503*). All Chaplain offices should be private offices with soundproofing and office doors that contain a window. The office space/furniture configuration should support the Chaplain being visible through the window and the visitor not being visible; to ensure public trust accountability and an individual's privacy.

1.6.3. Chapels should be designed and constructed by those with professional experience in providing aesthetics that are conducive to worship and meet the religious needs of multi-faith users. Fixed features like stained glass windows should be appropriate for any religious faith group. Many other chapel furnishings and ceremonial fixtures are unique to each faith group;

therefore, these items need to be non-fixed, portable, or able to be screened from view. Storage area(s) near the sanctuary must be provided for these items so that they can be changed out as needed for each different faith service. Ideally, pews or seating in a sanctuary should also be movable to allow for specific directional orientations, open floor space for bows and prostrations, etc.

Table 1. Base Chapel Space Criteria

	Small Chapel (Net Square Foot [SF])	Large Chapel (Net Square Foot [SF])	Comments
Worship Center			
Narthex	420	1,972	Narthex = 30% of net area of sanctuary
Sanctuary			Sanctuary must accommodate choir, musicians, display area, and pulpit
Sanctuary Multi-Faith Storage	600	1,200	Items used for multi-faith worship services (e.g., stations of the cross, screens)
Chancel	300	1,375	
Nave	1,100	5,200	Nave Criteria: 13 SF per person for 300 seats or greater; 11 SF per person (pn) for less than 300 seats.
Multi-Faith Worship Center	150	600	
Blessed Sacrament Room	250	250	
Sacristy	300	300	Chancel/Multi-Faith Criteria: 25 SF per person
Baptistery	100	100	
Choir Room	500	500	
Choir Changing Room	225	225	
Bride's Room	120	120	
Cry Room	120	120	
Multimedia Control Room	120	120	To control lights, sound, internet, projector, etc.
Storage	400	600	Musical instruments, sheet music, worship service handouts, brochures, etc.

Coat Room	150	150	
Note: Restrooms should be located near the worship center entrance to accommodate foot washing rituals for certain faiths.			
Administration Spaces			
Reception and Waiting Area	200	200	8 seats at 20 SF each plus reception area
Receptionist	48	48	In small chapels, the Wing Chaplain's Secretary typically serves as the Receptionist.
Wing Chaplain Office	160	160	
Chaplain Offices	140	140	SF per each Chaplain
Reserve/Auxiliary Chaplain	140	140	One office per every 4 IMAs
Visiting Staff	20	20	Task station minimum 1, more can be added, if required
Parish Coordinator	48	48	The number of Coordinators will depend on the number and type of services provided
Superintendent	100	100	Senior Enlisted leader
Administrative Support	8 SF / pn	8 SF / pn	8 SF per full time assigned staff (pn) includes space for copiers/printers, file cabinets, admin supplies, shelter in place kits, etc.
Staff Office	48	48	One per assigned staff
Conference Room	-	-	Allocated per AFMAN 32-1084: FC 6, CG 61 Admin Overview Section - Table 1.4
Counseling Room	100	100	One per building (soundproof & visibility standards incorporated)
Lactation Room	100	100	Room also can be used as a quiet meditation room
Break Room	3 SF / pn	3 SF / pn	3 SF per assigned full time staff (pn)
Kitchen ¹	250		Included only if the installation does not have a religious education

			center
* NOTES: 1. Kitchen can be added if there is not a religious education center. 250 NSF includes kitchen and storage area.			