

Ideas of how to be a welcoming parish for caregivers of persons with dementia, sensory disorders, autism, anxiety, etc.

- Alternative worship space where the Mass is live streamed (include captioning and volume could be adjusted lower if needed) and communion is brought to that room. Have some alternative seating options such as rocking chair, beanbag chair, balance ball chair, comfortable chairs and other sensory tools.
- Have a sensory free zone or safe that is available during worship or church events for someone to go into if need a quiet space to regulate.
- Tools to have available while at church and/or sensory space: noise dampening head phones, alternative seating such as rocking chair, sensory roller ball, wiggle seat, weighted lap pad, sunglasses, fidgets (silicone rosary example) or other fidgets, picture missals, twiddle muffs, etc.
- Adapt a normal weekend mass to be sensory friendly on an occasional basis; it could be even be done on a weekday Mass.
- Live stream the mass or worship so people can join in worship remotely on days not able to come to Mass because they are caring for their loved one with dementia.
- Access signage so people know where accessible entrances and bathrooms are located. Here is a resource on [physical accessibility](#) that includes three companies that help with signage inside and outside a building.
- Use of person first language when talking about disabilities...person with dementia. Which is like the slide you talked about last night of what things not to say.
- Provide large print missals, captioning, assistive listening devices or other accommodations and tools for communication.
- Work with caregiver for ideas of how their loved one with dementia, or disabilities, to share their gifts and talents they have the ability to do.
- Simple and meaningful ways people can support a caregiver:
 1. Show up for them
 2. Give them a (much needed) break
 3. Listen
 4. Share information on support groups
 5. Help with day-to-day such as bring a meal, mow the grass, scoot the snow, cleaning, walk the dog, provide a gift card, etc.,
 6. Make sure they practice good self-care.
 7. Recruit family, or professional caregivers, to help and create a caregiving schedule that allows them some time off.

