

Artificial Intelligence Use in the Church Workplace Policy Template

(Last updated [DATE])

Use this policy template to provide guidance regarding any uses of artificial intelligence within church work

Disclaimer

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Laws and regulations governing artificial intelligence, data privacy, employment, and related matters vary by jurisdiction and change frequently. This template is not tailored to the specific circumstances, legal obligations, or operational needs of any particular church or religious organization.

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This template reflects general guidance as of the date of publication and may not account for developments in law or technology occurring after that date.

When to Use This Template

- To create a workplace culture demonstrating commitments to biblical integrity, and legal, ethical, and responsible uses of artificial intelligence (AI)
- To provide acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI for church work, including examples
- To establish an ongoing process for church leaders to examine current and potential AI uses and potential policy changes as AI and the legal landscape surrounding it continue to evolve

How to Use This Template

1. Review this template with qualified legal counsel familiar with applicable federal, state, and local laws, as well as the specific laws governing nonprofit and religious organizations in your jurisdiction
2. Consult with relevant advisors (including HR, finance, and technology professionals) as appropriate
3. Customize bracketed sections of this template to reflect your church's actual practices, structure, and values
4. Approve through a process consistent with your church's governing bylaws, such as a board-approved action
5. Communicate to all personnel
6. Apply consistently
7. Review at least once a year and amend as needed

Best For

- Church Board
- Technology Committee
- Church IT Leader/Department
- Executive Pastor

Editor's Note

Churches often handle sensitive or confidential information. Examples of sensitive or confidential information include, but are not limited to, pastoral care records, prayer requests, information about children and youth, employment-related matters, donor information, membership records, volunteer screening data, disciplinary matters, family crisis details, and financial assistance request details.

Some churches locally store the information. Others store it in cloud-based arrangements, typically through enterprise agreements with third-party providers that include provisions regarding related protections. This policy template should be customized to align with a church's existing practices, including related safeguards and protections associated with sensitive or confidential information.

[Church Name]’s Artificial Intelligence Use in the Workplace Policy

Effective Date: [Insert Date]

1. Purpose

The **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]** seeks to **[INSERT CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT]**.

Consistent with the church’s biblical understanding of humanity and humanity’s relationship with God, **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]** believes technology is a tool to aid, but not replace, humanity in its work to honor, glorify, and serve God.

To advance the church’s mission and its values, this policy is adopted by **[INSERT CHURCH BOARD OR OTHER APPROVER]** regarding any uses of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any work created for, or on behalf of, **[INSERT CHURCH’S NAME]** by pastors, employees, independent contractors, and volunteers (collectively referred to here as “Personnel”).

This policy, among other things, defines AI, identifies who must follow the policy, explains church-approved AI tools, outlines acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI tools, establishes required training, and stipulates review processes for potential violations.

The **[INSERT CHURCH BOARD OR OTHER APPROVER]** administers the policy unless it otherwise designates **[INSERT BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** to administer the policy.

2. Scope

This policy covers uses of AI tools in the church workplace. It applies to all Personnel of **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**.

AI learns from and mimics large amounts of data to create content, such as text, images, transcriptions, spreadsheets, scheduling, audio, video, music, code, or more, based on inputs or prompts submitted by humans. This policy covers all AI technologies (“Tools”), including Large Language Models (LLMs), generative AI (Gen AI), and agentic AI, offered by any provider (“Provider”). Examples include (but are not limited to) OpenAI’s ChatGPT, Anthropic’s Claude, Google’s Gemini, Microsoft’s Co-Pilot, Zoom’s AI Companion, Gloop’s Content Studio, and Gloop’s Ministry Chat.

Any Personnel who are uncertain about this policy, including whether any app, website, or software feature falls under it, should contact **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** via an email submitted to **[INSERT DESIGNATED EMAIL ADDRESS]**.

3. Tools

Only Tools approved in advance by **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** may be used by Personnel for any work created for, or on behalf of, **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**.

[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER] will only approve Tools involving organizational-level agreements reached between **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]** and Providers whose terms of service provide:

- Policies and protections for sensitive or confidential information. Examples of sensitive or confidential information include but are not limited to pastoral care records, prayer requests, information about children and youth, employment-related matters, donor information, membership records, volunteer screening data, disciplinary matters, family crisis details, and financial assistance request details.
- Assurances that no church-submitted data will be used by the Provider to train any models, undergo human review, or otherwise become publicly accessible in any way (also known as “Sandboxed” or “Sandboxing”).

[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER] will review each Provider’s terms of service for a church-approved Tool at least annually to ensure they remain consistent with this policy.

For organizational-level agreements involving costs, the **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** must first receive budgetary approval from the **[INSERT CHURCH CFO OR FINANCE COMMITTEE OR DEPARTMENT]**.

A list of church-approved Tools is available at **[INSERT LINK OR LOCATION]**.

Access to church-approved Tools is granted to Personnel on a case-by-case basis by **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]**.

Requests for access must be submitted via **[INSERT METHOD, SUCH AS EMAIL]**.

The list of church-approved Tools is subject to continuous review and updating. Any changes made to the list of church-approved Tools will be communicated by **[INSERT BOARD OR**

BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER] via **[INSERT METHOD, SUCH AS EMAIL]** to all Personnel.

All questions regarding church-approved Tools, as well as potential Tools for review, should be sent to **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** via an email submitted to **[INSERT DESIGNATED EMAIL ADDRESS]**.

4. Acceptable Uses

[INSERT CHURCH NAME] recognizes lawful, ethical, and responsible uses of church-approved Tools can enhance productivity, efficiency, and decision-making.

However, AI should support human decision-making, not replace it.

Content generated by Tools can be inaccurate, misleading, or fabricated (also known as “hallucinations”) or may contain intellectual property owned by other persons or parties. Before publishing or using anything generated from a church-approved Tool, Personnel must review it to verify accuracy and potential bias, and to ensure as much as possible that no known copyrighted material was infringed.

Activities constituting acceptable uses include:

- Productivity enhancements, such as to-do lists and project management;
- Calendar and event scheduling;
- Church communications, including newsletters, e-newsletters, emails, and social media posts;
- Program schedules and activities;
- Graphics;
- Idea generators, such as icebreakers for meetings or events or Bible study questions;
- Meeting agendas (as long as the Tool is properly Sandboxed to protect sensitive or confidential information);
- Note-taking and transcription for events, programs, and meetings (as long as the Tool is properly Sandboxed to protect sensitive or confidential information);
- Summarizing lengthy or complex materials.

To maintain transparency, Personnel must clearly label any public uses of AI-generated content and should cite original sources used by AI-generated content whenever possible.

[OPTIONAL] Works created for, or on behalf of, **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]** are owned by **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**. However, the US Copyright Office typically only grants copyright protections for works made by humans. To use any church-approved Tools for any church-related work that potentially qualifies for copyright protection, including sermons, musical compositions, dramatic productions, or multimedia, Personnel must receive advance approval

from **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** **[OPTIONAL END]**.

Questions regarding acceptable uses should be sent to **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** via an email submitted to **[INSERT DESIGNATED EMAIL ADDRESS]**.

5. Unacceptable Uses

Personnel are strictly prohibited from using free or premium personal accounts with a Provider for any church work.

Church-approved Tools **cannot** be used for:

- Sensitive or confidential information, unless the Provider's terms of service or other written assurances indicate the Tool is properly Sandboxed to address this type of data. **[NOTE: Even with a Provider's written assurances, churches should consult with qualified legal counsel and their insurance providers to determine whether these activities constitute acceptable legal and risk liability exposures];**
- Screening job applications, resumes, and/or recorded job interviews **[NOTE: Churches that opt to do any of these activities must follow applicable state and federal laws related to bias testing and public disclosures and should strongly consider outlining these requirements as a part of this policy.];**
- Uploading copyrighted materials owned by **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]** without permission from **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** unless the Provider's terms of service or other written assurances indicate the Tool is properly Sandboxed;
- Engaging in activities that are illegal, deceptive, misleading, defamatory, libelous, slanderous, and/or otherwise inconsistent with **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s mission and values.

Questions regarding unacceptable uses should be sent to **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** via an email submitted to **[INSERT DESIGNATED EMAIL ADDRESS]**.

6. IT Activities

Use of church-approved Tools to create any tools, materials, or outputs (e.g., code) that may affect the church's Information Technology (IT) systems or platforms must first receive special approval from **[INSERT CHURCH IT COMMITTEE, DIRECTOR, OR DECISION-MAKER]**.

7. Complaints

All Personnel must report actual or suspected violations of this policy immediately to **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** via **[INSERT METHOD, SUCH AS EMAIL TO (email address)]**.

The **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will immediately notify the **[INSERT CHURCH BOARD (IF APPLICABLE)]**, the church's senior leadership, the church's legal counsel, and the church's insurance provider to determine appropriate next steps.

Any steps, including final decisions regarding appropriate responses and actions, rest with the **[INSERT CHURCH BOARD]** in consultation with the church's legal counsel and insurance provider, and will comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws.

8. Violations

All Personnel must comply with **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s AI policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary actions, including (but not limited to) suspension, dismissal, or termination of a contractual or employment relationship.

9. Training

All Personnel must undergo annual training that covers **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s AI policy, church-approved Tools, acceptable and unacceptable uses, and processes for reporting complaints.

10. Insurance

The **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will consult at least once a year with **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s legal counsel and insurance provider to ensure this policy and all activities covered by it fall within appropriate coverages. Any identified deficiencies will be immediately addressed, either through new and/or expanded insurance coverage, a modification of this policy, or both.

11. Disclosures

Should a Provider of a church-approved Tool disclose a breach of any kind, the **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will immediately contact the **[INSERT CHURCH BOARD OR OTHER APPROVER]**, the church's senior leadership, the church's legal counsel, and the church's insurance provider.

The **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will inform the board, the church's senior leadership, its legal counsel, and its insurance provider immediately regarding measures taken by the Provider to mitigate the breach, as well as any church data potentially compromised by the breach. The church will follow all applicable local, state, and federal laws related to the breach and required actions in response to it.

12. Policy Review

AI, and the tools utilizing it, continue to evolve, as do the laws governing it. This policy will be reviewed at least once per year to keep pace with changes and developments, although the **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** may make recommendations regarding amendments to this policy at any time.

Any amendments must be adopted following the processes outlined by **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s governing bylaws.

Approved by: _____

Date: _____
