

Artificial Intelligence Use in the Church Workplace Policy Template

Version 2.0 (Last updated October 1, 2026)

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

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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
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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
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Best For

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

This policy supplements, and does not replace, **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s existing policies on confidentiality, child protection, information security, records retention, and employment.

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), agentic AI, and AI features embedded within otherwise-approved software, apps, websites, browsers, meeting platforms, office suites, search tools, communications systems, or other technologies, offered by any provider (“Provider”). Agentic AI includes AI systems that can plan or take actions through connected tools or systems with limited human intervention. Examples include general-purpose AI assistants and chatbots (such as OpenAI ChatGPT, Anthropic Claude, Google Gemini, and Gloo Ministry Chat), AI writing and image-generation tools (such as Gloo Content Studio), AI meeting assistants and note-takers (such as Zoom AI Companion), and AI features within church management, communications, design, and office software (such as Microsoft Copilot). Each embedded AI feature is a Tool separate from the software it is part of.

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]**. Each embedded AI feature requires its own approval, even if **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]** already uses the software it is part of and even if the Provider turned the feature on by default.

[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER] will only approve Tools used under an account held by **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**, not by an individual, and governed by the Provider’s business, team, or enterprise terms, whether negotiated or accepted online, after reviewing the intended use, information the Tool may access, actions the Tool may take, appropriate human oversight, and the Provider’s applicable terms and data practices. This review should be proportionate to the sensitivity of the information the Tool will handle and should consider, as applicable:

- whether the Provider uses other companies (subprocessors) to process church data;
- whether the Tool connects to other tools, plug-ins, or services;
- how long data is kept and how it is deleted;
- administrator and access controls;
- security safeguards;

- how and when the Provider will notify the church of a security incident;
- where data is stored; and
- who else may access church-submitted data.

The preapproval review above is a risk assessment of the Tool and its intended use. Separately, before a Tool may handle sensitive or confidential information, the Provider's terms of service or other written assurances must include the following minimum commitments (collectively, "Protected Data Terms"):

- Commitments to protect 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;
- A commitment that church-submitted data, including prompts, uploaded files, and outputs, will not be used to train or improve AI models unless the church "opts in" in writing;
- Limits on human review of church-submitted data to purposes such as security, abuse prevention, support the church requests, or legal compliance, carried out under confidentiality obligations;
- A commitment not to sell church-submitted data, or disclose it or make it publicly available, except as needed to provide the service or as required by law;
- Reasonable security safeguards and a commitment to notify the church of security incidents affecting church data; and
- Information sufficient for the church to evaluate retention, deletion, subprocessors, integrations, access controls, and other secondary uses of church-submitted data.

As part of the church's Tool and Provider review, **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will review each Provider's terms of service and the church's approved use of each Tool at least annually, and sooner either when a Tool adds materially new AI features, integrations, data uses, or autonomous capabilities or when the Provider materially changes its terms to ensure they remain consistent with this policy.

Administrators of church software and platforms must turn off embedded AI features that are not church-approved Tools, where the software allows. They must also notify **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** when a Provider adds or turns on a new AI feature.

For Tools 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]**. Access will be granted only after the individual completes the training described in Section 9.

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]**.

When a Tool is removed from the approved list, or an individual's access is no longer needed, **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will revoke access and, where available, request deletion of church data held by the Provider.

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, particularly in decisions that materially affect individuals.

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, check for bias, and confirm, as far as reasonably possible, that it does not reproduce copyrighted material without permission.

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. Meeting agendas containing sensitive or confidential information may be used with a Tool only when the Tool is covered by Protected Data Terms and the use is otherwise approved as required by this policy;
- Note-taking and transcription for events, programs, and meetings (as long as the Tool is covered by Protected Data Terms to protect sensitive or confidential information). AI recording, transcription, summarization, or note-taking involving pastoral care, counseling, personnel matters, disciplinary matters, children or youth, legal matters, or other sensitive or confidential communications requires advance approval and must comply with applicable consent, privacy, privilege, confidentiality, record-retention, and data-security requirements;
- Summarizing lengthy or complex materials.

To maintain transparency:

- Personnel must disclose the use of AI in public-facing content that is substantially generated by AI.
- Personnel must clearly label any AI-generated or AI-altered image, audio, or video that depicts realistic people, places, or events.
- Personnel must verify, and cite where appropriate, the sources of factual claims in AI-assisted content.

[OPTIONAL] Ownership of works created for or on behalf of **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]** will be determined by applicable law and any governing employment, contractor, volunteer, or other written agreement. Copyright protection for works created with AI depends on the nature and extent of human authorship. Under current U.S. law, copyright protection may apply to AI-assisted works where sufficient human-authored expressive elements are present, while material involving expressive elements determined by AI may not be protected. Before using church-approved Tools for church-related work that may qualify for copyright protection, including sermons, musical compositions, dramatic productions, or multimedia, Personnel must **[disclose that use to] [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 may not use personal accounts, free or paid, with any Provider for church work, and may not enter church information into any Tool that is not church-approved.

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 covered by Protected Data Terms 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 (1) constitute acceptable legal and risk liability exposures and, (2) pose impact on clergy–penitent privilege.];**
- Using AI to materially influence recruiting, screening job applications or resumes, evaluating recorded job interviews, hiring, compensation, promotion, performance evaluation, discipline, termination, or other material employment decisions **[NOTE: Churches considering any of these activities should first consult qualified legal counsel regarding applicable federal, state, and local laws, which may impose requirements involving notices, consent, bias or impact assessments, documentation, human review, or other safeguards, and regarding whether any exemptions for religious employers apply and how far they extend.];**
- Uploading materials licensed from third parties, such as song lyrics, licensed curriculum, books, or publisher resources, unless the license permits it; or 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 covered by Protected Data Terms;
- Engaging in activities that are illegal, deceptive, misleading, defamatory, libelous, slanderous, and/or otherwise inconsistent with **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s mission and values;
- Creating or distributing an unauthorized AI-generated or AI-altered impersonation, digital replica, voice, image, video, or other realistic simulation of a pastor, employee, volunteer, member, donor, or other identifiable person.

Personnel must independently verify through a known and trusted channel any unusual or sensitive requests involving payments, credentials, data transfers, account changes, or other consequential actions and must not rely solely on AI-generated or electronic voice, video, or other communications to authenticate such requests.

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 software code, scripts, automations, or integrations, or to deploy AI agents or automated workflows that may access, modify, transmit, delete, or act upon church data, files, accounts, communications, calendars, databases, cloud storage, financial systems, or other Information Technology (IT) systems or platforms, must first receive special approval from **[INSERT CHURCH IT COMMITTEE, DIRECTOR, OR DECISION-MAKER]**. Actions by such Tools that send communications outside the church, make payments, change or delete records, or change access permissions require human approval before they are carried out.

7. Reporting Violations and Incidents

All Personnel must promptly report actual or suspected violations of this policy to **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** via **[INSERT METHOD, SUCH AS EMAIL TO (INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS)]**. Personnel who report in good faith will not be retaliated against.

[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER] will review each report. If a report involves possible exposure of sensitive or confidential information, a possible legal claim, or a possible security incident, **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will promptly notify the **[INSERT CHURCH BOARD (IF APPLICABLE)]**, the church's senior leadership, and the church's legal counsel and will follow the response procedures in Section 11. It will notify the church's insurance provider as counsel advises or as the church's insurance policies require.

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, where applicable, its 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 or revocation of access to church systems or Tools, removal from a volunteer role, suspension from a role, dismissal, or termination of a contractual or employment relationship.

9. Training

All Personnel must complete training before receiving access to church-approved Tools, and at least annually after that. Training covers **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s AI policy, church-approved Tools, acceptable and unacceptable uses, processes for reporting violations and incidents, risks associated with embedded and agentic AI, protection of sensitive or confidential information, and recognition and independent verification of AI-enabled impersonation or fraud attempts. Personnel must acknowledge in writing that they have read, and will comply with, this policy.

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 coverage. Any identified gaps will be promptly evaluated and addressed, which may include new and/or expanded insurance coverage, changes to this policy, changes to approved uses, or a combination of these.

11. Security Incidents

If a Provider notifies the church of a security incident affecting church data, or if Personnel learn that sensitive or confidential information was entered into an unapproved Tool or otherwise exposed through AI use, **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will promptly notify **[INSERT CHURCH BOARD OR OTHER APPROVER]**, senior leadership, and the church's legal counsel. It will notify the insurance provider as described in Section 7 and follow **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s incident response procedures, if any.

The **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]** will keep **[INSERT CHURCH BOARD OR OTHER APPROVER]**, the church's senior leadership, its legal counsel, and, as applicable, its insurance provider informed regarding measures taken by the Provider to contain the incident, as well as any church data potentially affected. The church will follow all applicable local, state, and federal laws related to the incident, including any notification requirements.

12. Records and Exceptions

Prompts, outputs, transcripts, summaries, and other AI-generated materials that constitute church records under **[INSERT CHURCH NAME]**'s records-retention policy **[INSERT REFERENCE]** are subject to that policy and to any applicable legal hold. Personnel may not enter communications with the church's legal counsel into a Tool unless legal counsel approves.

Any exception to this policy requires advance written approval from **[INSERT BOARD OR BOARD-DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT, COMMITTEE, OR STAFF MEMBER]**, will be documented, and will be reviewed as part of the annual policy review.

13. 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, and when applicable laws, Provider terms, church practices, or the church's approved uses of Tools change materially, to keep pace with changes and developments. This policy review is distinct from, but should take account of, the Tool and Provider reviews required by Section 3. 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: _____

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