

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence tools at Christchurch Baptist Church. It applies to all staff members, Trustees, and volunteers who create, edit, or distribute content on behalf of the church. This policy exists to help our team use AI well, not to restrict use. Our goal is to steward AI thoughtfully so that it enhances our ministry, protects our congregation, and honours God.

This policy covers all AI-powered tools including but not limited to: text generation tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot), image generation tools (e.g. DALL-E, Midjourney, Adobe Firefly), video and audio tools, AI-powered management platforms, and any AI features embedded in existing software.

Key Principles Of This Policy

1. *Human responsibility:* You remain responsible for anything you create or publish using AI.
2. *Protect confidentiality:* Never enter confidential, safeguarding or identifiable pastoral information into an AI system.
3. *Check before use:* AI output must be checked for accuracy, theology, tone and appropriateness.
4. *AI assists; it does not replace:* AI must not replace pastoral judgement, theological discernment, safeguarding procedures or professional advice.
5. *Be truthful:* Never use AI to deceive people about who created something or whether an image, event, quotation or story is real.
6. *Ask when unsure:* If in doubt, seek advice before using AI.

Privacy, Data Privacy and Confidentiality

Protecting personal, sensitive, and confidential information is the highest priority when using AI. AI tools must never be used in a way that exposes information entrusted to the church, its staff, congregation, or community.

Before entering information into any AI tool, consider whether that information would be appropriate to share with an external organisation. Do not enter confidential, sensitive, or personally identifiable information unless the tool is specifically and appropriately safeguarded for that purpose. Users should take account of the service's privacy terms, data retention, security arrangements and whether submitted information is used to train AI models.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Names or details connected with pastoral care or counselling.
- Safeguarding information or concerns.
- Health, financial, family, or other sensitive personal information.
- Confidential staff, volunteer, or church-member information.
- Private correspondence, meeting notes, or internal documents containing sensitive information.
- Passwords, account details, security information, or other credentials.

Where possible, information should be anonymised or removed before using AI. Removing a person's name does not necessarily make information anonymous. A combination of details about their circumstances, role, family, health, location or situation may still enable them to be identified. If there is any doubt about whether information is safe to enter into an AI system, do not enter it and seek advice first.

This policy must be considered alongside Christchurch Baptist Church's [Data Protection Policy](#) and our wider responsibilities under UK GDPR, which continue to apply whenever AI tools are used to process personal or confidential information.

AI transcription, recording or meeting-summary tools must not be used in confidential, pastoral, personnel or safeguarding conversations without appropriate authorisation and the knowledge of those involved. Once summary minutes/notes have been prepared and checked for accuracy, any audio recordings or full transcripts should be securely deleted as soon as they are no longer required, unless there is a clear and authorised reason for retaining them.

Responsible Creation and Human Review

AI is a tool that assists human ministry; it does not replace pastoral care, theological discernment, or the work of the Holy Spirit. The following guidelines apply to all AI-assisted content creation.

AI can be used as a drafting assistant, not as an author, generating first drafts, outlines, brainstorm ideas, edit existing content, and suggest improvements, etc. All AI-generated content must be reviewed, edited, and approved by a human editor before publication. The staff member, Trustee or volunteer who reviews and approves the content is responsible for its accuracy, theological soundness, and tone. *"AI wrote it"* is not an acceptable explanation for errors.

All AI-generated or AI-assisted content must go through the following review process before publication:

- *Sermons and teaching content* must be reviewed for theological accuracy, biblical fidelity, and pastoral sensitivity. AI-generated sermon content should never be delivered without personal study, prayer, and pastoral review.
- *Communications and social media* must be reviewed for accuracy, tone, cohesive visual identity, and factual correctness.
- *Bible study and small group materials* must be reviewed for theological alignment with the church's doctrinal and theological positions.
- *Administrative and operational documents* must be reviewed for accuracy, clarity, and consistency by appropriate ministry leads, staff or Trustees.
- *External-facing content*, including website, app, and public materials, must be reviewed for accuracy, quality, and consistency of presentation before publication.

Theological Discernment

AI tools do not share our theological convictions; they reflect the broadest possible interpretation of Christian theology drawn from their training data. This means AI-generated content may:

- Soften or omit doctrines or theology Christchurch Baptist Church considers essential
- Present doctrinal or theological positions Christchurch Baptist Church does not hold
- Use language that avoids taking clear positions
- Default to the lowest-common-denominator interpretation of contested passages and issues

All AI-generated theological content must be checked against:

- The Bible, understood as the primary authority for Christian faith and practice
- Christchurch Baptist Church's doctrinal and theological positions
- Any relevant denominational or confessional standards to which Christchurch Baptist Church is committed
- The church's established teaching, values, and ministry practices

AI-generated material may sound confident and convincing while containing factual, biblical, or theological errors. Staff, Trustees, and volunteers remain fully responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of any material they use. AI should support theological study and preparation, not replace prayerful study, sound interpretation, trusted theological resources, or appropriate human oversight. Any quotations, statistics, historical claims, survey findings or references supplied by AI must be independently verified from a reliable source before use. Never assume that a quotation, book reference, Bible commentary citation, statistic, website, court case or other source supplied by AI actually exists.

Transparency and Disclosure

Our congregation trusts us; that trust is our most valuable asset. The following disclosure guidelines protect that trust:

Sermons and Teaching

Sermons are personal, pastoral communications. AI may assist with research, brainstorming, structure, editing and critique, but it must not replace the preacher's own engagement with Scripture, prayer, theological reflection and pastoral responsibility. If a sermon could not be delivered authentically without AI's contribution, it needs more personal work. The preacher must be able to take personal responsibility for the message as genuinely their own.

Before a sermon or message is shared publicly, if it has been substantially generated with AI assistance, (meaning that AI has contributed materially to the argument, structure, wording or creative content, rather than simply assisting with spelling, grammar, formatting, brainstorming or minor editing), the individual sharing the message should disclose this to the Church Elders and/or Minister (Team Leader) for accountability. Subsequent disclosure to the congregation is at the discretion of the Church Elders and/or Minister (Team Leader) and should be guided by the principle that authenticity builds trust.

Written Communications

Church communications (newsletters, emails, social media, website content) that are substantially AI-generated should be reviewed by a human editor. We do not require a disclosure label on every AI-assisted email, but we do require that the content is accurate, theologically sound, and representative of our church's voice.

Small Group and Bible Study Materials

If AI was used to generate discussion questions, study guides, or curriculum materials, the ministry leader should review and customize them before distribution.

When To Disclose The Use Of AI

Always disclose AI use when:

- Directly asked whether AI was used
- Content is presented as original research or scholarship

- AI-generated content includes personal stories or illustrations (which should always be replaced with real stories from your community)
- Content involves financial, legal, or medical advice (which should include a clear disclaimer)

Guiding principle: we do not hide AI use, but we do not lead with it either. Those we lead care that the content is accurate, pastoral, and theologically sound. If it is, the process that created it is secondary.

Image and Media Generation

AI-generated images, video, audio, and other media require particular care because they can sometimes be mistaken for genuine people, events, or communications. Their use should therefore reflect good judgement, transparency, and the values of the church.

AI-generated images and media may be used for purposes such as:

- Social media graphics, backgrounds, and supporting visual content
- Blog, website, or article header images
- Presentation slides, teaching materials, and sermon visuals
- Internal planning documents, concepts, and mood boards
- Event promotional materials, subject to appropriate review
- Creative concepts or illustrative material where it is clear that the content is not documenting a real event

AI-generated content should be reviewed for quality, accuracy, suitability, and consistency before publication.

AI-generated images and media should not be used in ways that could mislead, misrepresent, or cause unnecessary concern. This includes but is not limited to:

- Creating recognisable depictions of real people without appropriate permission
- Presenting AI-generated images as photographs or recordings of actual events
- Creating images that could reasonably be mistaken for real congregants, staff members, attendees, or church activities
- Producing content that misrepresents the church, its beliefs, or its activities
- Generating theological or biblical imagery that conflicts with the church's doctrine, values, or established approach to representation
- Creating depictions of Jesus, God, the Holy Spirit, biblical figures, or sacred events where the representation would be inconsistent with the church's theological convictions or pastoral judgement
- Creating deceptive, offensive, inappropriate, or unnecessarily disturbing material

AI must not be used to clone, imitate or materially alter the face or voice of a staff member, church member, public figure or other identifiable person without appropriate permission. Where there is uncertainty about whether AI-generated media is appropriate for public use, advice should be sought from the relevant ministry or department leader before publication.

Pastoral Care and Safeguarding

The use of AI in pastoral care requires particular sensitivity. While AI can support preparation, research, and resource creation, it must never replace human pastoral judgement, relationship, professional support, or appropriate safeguarding procedures.

AI is not a counsellor: AI tools must not be used as a substitute for pastoral counselling, professional therapy, medical advice, safeguarding support, or crisis intervention. Where someone is experiencing significant distress, is at risk of harm, or requires specialist support, they should be connected promptly with an appropriately qualified person or service. Pastoral responsibility must remain with people, not with an AI system.

Ministers, staff members and ministry leaders may use AI tools to support their preparation in appropriate ways, including:

- Researching general pastoral care themes and common questions
- Gathering background information ahead of pastoral conversations
- Preparing discussion prompts or general resources
- Drafting follow-up materials for congregants, subject to appropriate review
- Creating prayer guides, devotional materials, and other pastoral resources
- Exploring general approaches to pastoral situations without including identifiable or confidential information

Any AI-generated material used in a pastoral context should be reviewed carefully for accuracy, tone, theological suitability, and pastoral sensitivity.

Information shared in counselling sessions, prayer ministry, pastoral meetings, safeguarding conversations, or other confidential settings must not be entered into AI tools unless the use of that tool has been specifically approved for handling such information. This includes names, contact details, personal circumstances, sensitive disclosures, and any combination of details that could reasonably identify an individual. Anonymising information does not automatically make its use appropriate. Where there is any uncertainty, confidential pastoral information should not be entered into an AI system, and advice should be sought from the appropriate church leader or data protection contact.

AI may assist with administrative preparation but must not be used as the sole or primary basis for decisions about employment, recruitment, volunteering, safeguarding, pastoral care, discipline, eligibility or access to ministry.

This section should be read alongside Christchurch Baptist Church's [Safeguarding Policies and Procedures for 0–18s and Adults at Risk](#), which continue to apply in full whenever AI is used in connection with pastoral care, safeguarding, ministry or decision-making.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

AI-generated content must be used with appropriate regard for copyright, licensing and intellectual property. Users must not assume that material is free to reproduce simply because it has been generated or supplied by an AI tool. Where AI supplies quotations, images, music, references or substantial material derived from another source, appropriate checks should be made before publication.

Care For Creation

As responsible stewards of God's creation, we will take seriously both our own concerns and those of others about AI's environmental impact, using it thoughtfully and proportionately and avoiding unnecessary use.

Training and Induction

All new staff members and key volunteers will receive training and specific explanation regarding this AI policy within their first 2-4 weeks.

AI tools evolve rapidly. This policy will be updated annually or as needed; ministry leads will host a brief AI refresher training whenever changes are made.

Accountability

Violations of this policy will be handled through Christchurch Baptist Church's line-management and disciplinary processes.

Unintentional first violations will be addressed with education and correction. Where concerns are repeated or significant, further action may be taken in line with appropriate church procedures.

The goal is education, not punishment. But data privacy violations can have real consequences for real people, and we take that seriously.

If confidential or personal information is accidentally entered into an AI system, or AI-generated content is published which may cause harm, the matter should be reported promptly to the Minister (Team Leader) and/or appropriate Trustee responsible for data-protection. Staff, Trustees and volunteers should not attempt to conceal an accidental breach.