



COVENANT CHURCH

Staff Use of Artificial Intelligence – Working Policy

Approved by Session: March 4, 2026

Artificial Intelligence is a tool that is insinuating its way deeply into our day-to-day lives. Despite broad moral misgivings about questions of potential abuses on the part of users, and potential broaches of power on the part of the technology itself, it has been eagerly, and often uncritically, embraced for its practical benefits, not only by our surrounding world but also by the broader church.

Like all tools, AI is potentially beneficial when properly used, and it is potentially destructive when used improperly. At this point in our understanding, these are strengths and concerns related to this tool.

Strengths

The potential strengths of AI which we as followers of Christ would want to embrace include, among other things, its remarkable ability to:

- Research and summarize information on the internet
- Analyze large volumes of data
- Cull, gather, organize, summarize, synthesize, and consolidate ideas
- Correct grammar and spelling mistakes
- Translate content into other languages
- Explore design alternatives
- Generate creative or clarifying images or videos

Concerns

When we rely on to AI to take us beyond these support tasks we begin to enter into potentially problematic areas, such as:

- *Diminishing the Image of God in Us:* We do this when we relinquish to it tasks which have been understood historically to be part of the expression of our uniqueness as human beings created in God's image. This includes looking to AI to think, speak, express, write, or create for us. We thereby diminish our own humanity and we compromise part of our essence as human beings.
- *Eroding Human Distinctiveness:* We do this when we blur the distinction between human and machine, eroding what makes us distinct and uniquely valuable as human beings who bear the image of God. This could include: treating AI as if it were a person (perhaps such as giving it names, personifying it with personal pronouns "he" and "she," or treating it with manners); looking to AI to meet relational needs that God intends would be met by other human beings (friendship, counsel, romance, etc.); and moving from turning to AI to seek information or refine ideas to turning to AI to seek wisdom and direction.
- *Undermining our Dependence on God:* We do this when we rely on AI in times when we should be relying on the Lord, thereby undermining our trust relationship with him. In the midst of every act of service involving communication, including teaching, writing an article, preparing a lesson plan, laying out a ministry schedule, or articulating desired ministry outcomes, there comes a necessary moment of crisis when God gives us the gift of exposing the inadequacy of reliance on anything or anyone other than him. AI, like a lever or inclined plane, is a tool that beneficially reduces the burden of our work, but should never be allowed to shift the burden of our dependence off of God and place it

elsewhere.

- *Relinquishing our Judgment:* We do this when we relinquish our powers of judgment, and allow AI indiscriminately to sift, cull, draw upon, and present the collective insights of humanity as captured on the internet. This includes any research we do on the Internet in which we do not set our own parameters related to sources. When we ignore this step, we become subject to AI “averaging” the collective available wisdom of humanity (without acknowledging inherent biases and significant places of underrepresentation) and then squeezing that through an algorithm which tailors it to us (with our known preferences and perspectives) as its recipient.
- *Distorting the Truth:* We do this when we use AI to misrepresent the truth for personal gain or immoral motives, or when it causes unintentional hurt. This includes blurring the distinction between the real and the artificial, invented, or misleadingly represented, whether through false information or false images, in an effort to persuade, deceive, or to cause harm. We likewise reject any use of AI to access information or create material that is destructive (such as generating pornography or developing weapons), or dishonest (plagiarism or cheating, for example), or to generate content that is immoral and offensive to God.
- *Falsely Representing Ourselves:* We do this when we use AI with the goal of presenting ourselves in the best possible light, using it to erase or cover over our shortcomings and limitations as human beings, and make ourselves appear better than we are, thereby diminishing the glory of God. This includes relying on AI without attribution for wording for greeting cards, or messages, or doctored photos.
- *Mistreating the Environment:* We do this when we use AI for personal or organizational benefit without regard to the broader impact on the environment and the community, thereby failing to steward well the earth God entrusted to us. Evidence is clear that AI data centers have the potential to divert exorbitant amounts of resources away from other community needs and have a detrimental impact through energy consumption, water use, and electronic waste. As with any beneficial tool, from cars to copiers, we are wise as stewards of God-given resources to balance benefits against costs.

Practices

Rather than providing a lengthy set of rules for use, this policy encourages each AI user on staff to develop a theologically-informed mindset related to artificial intelligence, together with an awareness of the ways in which using this tool can reflect his design of us as human beings and serve his Kingdom purposes in God-honoring ways - or not. We strongly encourage collaboration with other staff members in discerning appropriate uses of AI in specific situations.

General guidelines for using AI as members of the Covenant staff include:

- Use AI to refine your work, not to do your work. Seek the Lord first, wrestling with him and with his purposes/intentions/ wisdom/leading. And do your own thinking, researching, creating, expressing, and arranging of ideas first. Then, if beneficial, let AI refine.
- Give attribution. Whenever you use AI in a way that materially changes or improves your work, acknowledge it. Say “I used AI to help me generate this chart” or “I used AI to help me express what I was struggling to express.”
- Never use AI to generate a message, song, poem, or prayer that you use in the context of public worship or Christian instruction. This is both dangerous and unethical. It hands over an inherently spiritual act to an utterly non-spiritual entity, and it presents that work as our own. It is better to lead in a poor prayer or lesson of your own making than a polished presentation created by a machine, its secular programming, and its programmer’s algorithms.
- Exercise extreme caution when sharing content of a private or personal nature, such as counseling notes, prayer needs, or giving records.
- Do not use AI to replace human beings for friendship, pastoral care, or godly counsel.

There are lines that, if crossed, will lead to employee discipline. These include:

- Using AI with intent to deceive, for personal gain, or for other immoral reasons.
- “Aigerism”: sharing AI-generated work and representing it as our own.
- Making confidential information available to unsecured AI.