

East Taieri Church

Artificial Intelligence Usage Policy

Version 2.0 | [Date] | Approved by East Taieri Church Elders

Preamble. Why This Policy Exists

AI tools have become genuinely useful for drafting, research, and administration, and we want our staff and volunteers to use them confidently. But they also raise real questions for a Christian community — about truth, authenticity, and the dignity of the people we serve. This policy exists to help our use of AI reflect who we are: a community committed to truth, to people, and to the faithful service of Christ.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and ministry leaders using AI tools (chat tools such as ChatGPT and Claude, AI image generators, and other AI-powered software) in connection with their role at East Taieri Church — on church or personal devices.

2. Permitted Tools

The table below sets out our current position on commonly used AI tools. It will be reviewed at least annually. For any tool not listed, seek approval from [responsible staff member] first.

Tier	Tool / Platform	Restrictions
Approved	Claude.ai, Microsoft Copilot (work account)	No personal or pastoral data
Approved with care	ChatGPT (free tier), Canva AI	No personal data; review all output before use
Approval required	Any AI tool used for pastoral correspondence	Discuss with [responsible staff member] first
Prohibited	Any consumer AI tool, for congregant personal data	Never permitted — see Section 5

Note:

Paid ‘enterprise’ tiers of some tools offer stronger data privacy guarantees than free versions. Confirm which tier is in use before assuming enhanced protections apply.

3. Responsible Use

AI tools are assistants, not authorities. They do not replace theological discernment, pastoral wisdom, or professional judgement, and staff remain personally responsible for anything they publish or send, whether or not AI was involved.

- All AI-assisted content must be reviewed and approved by a human before use or publication.
- AI must not be used to generate misleading content or to impersonate a specific person.

- **Preaching and teaching:** AI can assist with research and drafting, but the preacher remains fully responsible for the content, and should not let AI substitute for their own engagement with Scripture and prayer. Undisclosed, largely AI-generated sermons are discouraged.
 - **Pastoral care:** AI must not be used to draft responses to someone in crisis without a staff member's direct oversight, and any AI-assisted pastoral correspondence must be substantially personalised before sending.
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4. Data Privacy and Security

The following must never be entered into consumer AI tools (including free tiers of ChatGPT, Claude, or similar):

- Names and contact details of congregation members or staff
- Pastoral care information, prayer requests, or confidential disclosures
- Health, financial, or giving information, and information about minors
- Church login credentials or IT infrastructure details

Consumer tools may use input data to train their models, even where opt-out is offered by default — an unacceptable risk for sensitive personal information. Where enterprise-tier tools with stronger guarantees are available, prefer these for anything involving names or organisational information. Report any suspected data breach involving AI tools to [responsible staff member] immediately.

5. Transparency, Accuracy, and Copyright

Transparency

Where AI has generated a substantial portion of published content (an article, image, or resource), acknowledge it briefly — e.g., “Drafted with AI assistance and reviewed by our staff.” Minor use (grammar checking, a single adapted idea) doesn't need disclosure. When in doubt, disclose.

Accuracy

AI tools frequently fabricate plausible-sounding but false quotations, statistics, and even Bible references. All scripture citations, quotations attributed to named individuals, and factual claims in AI-assisted content must be independently verified before publication.

Copyright

AI-generated images may draw on copyrighted training data — use caution with published materials, and avoid tools known to closely replicate copyrighted styles. Don't use AI to reproduce or closely paraphrase substantial portions of copyrighted texts without licensing. Seek advice before using AI-generated music in worship or recordings.

6. Training

New staff receive an orientation to this policy and our approved tools as part of induction. Staff are encouraged to build a working understanding of how AI tools function and where they fail — useful starting points include 3Blue1Brown's “But what is a GPT?” and Anthropic's and OpenAI's own guidance pages. Questions and learnings should be shared with [responsible staff member].

7. Violations

- **Minor breaches** (e.g., missing attribution, unintentional non-compliance) will be addressed through a supportive conversation and guidance, not formal discipline, for a first occurrence.

- **Serious breaches** (data privacy failures, deliberate circumvention) will trigger a formal review by [responsible staff member / elder] and may lead to disciplinary action up to termination or dismissal. Any breach with legal implications will be reported to church leadership immediately.

8. Review and Acknowledgement

This policy is reviewed at least annually, and sooner if AI tools, relevant law, or church activities change significantly. The policy owner is [responsible staff member]. All staff and volunteers must confirm they have read and agreed to this policy on commencement of their role and after any material revision.

Version History.

Version	Date	Approved by	Changes
1.0	Oct 2023	East Taieri Church Elders	Initial policy
2.0	[Date]	East Taieri Church Elders	Major revision: tools register, privacy, pastoral guidance

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