02 · PATH A · FORMAL POLICY

CHURCH AI GOVERNANCE POLICY

An editable leadership policy template. Select options in brackets and obtain appropriate review before adoption.

Working draft v0.2 · 22 October 2026 · For church leadership review

Church name	Policy owner	Approved by	Effective	Next review
[Name]	[Role]	[Body]	[Date]	[Date]

ADOPTION NOTE

This template is not a substitute for legal counsel, church governance documents, child-protection requirements, insurance terms, data-processing reviews, or denominational policies. Do not publish without replacing bracketed items.

1. PURPOSE AND CONVICTIONS

[Church name] may use artificial intelligence to support ministry administration, communication, research, and other approved work. AI is a tool, not a source of spiritual authority or a substitute for the relationships and responsibilities entrusted to church leaders. Scripture, the church's doctrinal commitments, pastoral accountability, and sound human judgment govern ministry decisions. Human beings bear God's image and deserve privacy, dignity, truthfulness, and care.

2. SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY

This policy applies to employees, ministry leaders, contractors, and volunteers when carrying out church responsibilities, on church or personal devices, and to AI features embedded in other software. Every AI-supported output or action must have an identifiable accountable human. The policy owner maintains approved-tool lists, receives exception requests, and coordinates training. Existing safeguarding, financial-control, HR, information-security, and pastoral confidentiality requirements override any less restrictive AI guidance.

3. APPROVED TOOLS AND PROCUREMENT

Only tools approved by [role] may be used for church work. Approval must specify permitted purposes and data classes. Before approval, review provider retention, training-on-customer-data provisions, access control, logging, deletion, subcontractors, relevant contracts, model behavior, and incident notification. Embedded AI features are not automatically approved because the parent application is approved. Maintain an approved-tools register (Appendix A) with owner, use, data permissions, review date, and restrictions.

4. INFORMATION CLASSIFICATION

Class	Includes
Public	Materials already authorized for public release.
Internal	Nonpublic but routine church operations.
Confidential	Member and donor records, internal personnel information, private communications.
Highly sensitive	Pastoral counseling and prayer details linked to people, medical or financial hardship information, children's data, abuse disclosures, credentials, and safeguarding records.

Never use confidential or highly sensitive data with an unapproved service. Approval of a tool alone does not authorize all information to be entered.

5. THE PERMITTED-USE DECISION FRAMEWORK

Green tasks may proceed under the approved-tools list and ordinary human verification. **Yellow** tasks require review from [role] or an explicitly documented approved workflow. **Red** tasks are prohibited as proposed and must stop. The one-page decision guide is an aid, not a substitute for this policy; where conflicts arise, the stricter requirement governs. Staff must escalate unclear cases.

6. PASTORAL CARE, TEACHING, AND DISCIPLESHIP

AI may assist brainstorming and research but must not independently provide pastoral counseling on the church's behalf, claim spiritual revelation or divine authority, determine doctrine, or impersonate a pastor. Sermons, lessons, curricula, and Scripture quotations require accountable review for textual accuracy, source integrity, theological fidelity, attribution, and pastoral appropriateness. Private pastoral conversations and prayer requests may not be recorded, transcribed, or entered into AI services without the required authorization and consent where applicable.

7. CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

Apply the church's child-protection and safeguarding rules to all AI use. No identifiable minor's records, media, care details, or participation data may be submitted to an unapproved AI system. Obtaining parental permission does not itself make an unapproved tool acceptable. AI must never be left as an unsupervised counselor or decision-maker for minors or vulnerable people.

8. COMMUNICATION, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, AND MEDIA

A human reviewer approves outward-facing AI-assisted material. Do not fabricate quotations, testimonials, ministry results, images of real events, endorsements, or evidence. Do not clone a person's voice or likeness without explicit authorization and appropriate disclosure. Respect copyright and license terms. Establish disclosure rules when synthetic content would materially alter a viewer's understanding.

9. AGENTS, INTEGRATIONS, AND CONSEQUENTIAL DECISIONS

AI agents and integrations require scoped permissions, designated operators, logs, and documented approvals. No unapproved autonomous financial disbursements, donor-data modifications, permission changes, public publication, employee evaluations, hiring decisions, or material communications may

occur. High-risk actions require independent human authorization and, when appropriate, dual control. Test in a safe environment before production.

10. STAFF USE AND TRAINING

Staff and relevant volunteers receive the decision guide, tool list, escalation contact, and scenario-based orientation before using AI for church work. Their acknowledgment documents receipt, not legal consent to unlimited monitoring. Supervisors periodically sample workflows and correct misuse through proportionate coaching or established personnel processes.

11. INCIDENTS AND EXCEPTIONS

Report suspected confidential-data exposure, misleading synthetic media, unauthorized agent actions, account compromise, or harmful AI output immediately to [contact]. Preserve relevant records and follow the church's incident-response procedure; do not independently erase evidence. Exceptions must be documented, limited in duration and scope, and approved by [role]. Legal notification duties must be evaluated promptly by qualified personnel.

12. GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

[Governing body] adopts the policy and names [owner]. Review at least annually, and sooner when tools, laws, safeguarding risks, or church operations materially change. Maintain a version log, list of approved tools, training attendance, exceptions, and incidents under appropriate privacy protections.

APPENDIX A: APPROVED TOOLS REGISTER

Tool / vendor	Approved purpose	Allowed data	Owner / review date
[Name]	[Purpose]	[Public / internal]	[Role / date]

APPENDIX B: STAFF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge receiving the current church AI guidelines, knowing where to find the approved-tool list, and knowing whom to contact before uncertain or sensitive uses.

Name _____ Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C: APPROVAL RECORD

Approved by _____ Decision date _____

Version _____ Review due _____