Ethical Use of AI – Artificial Intelligence

The Upper Midwest Committee on Ministry recognizes that AI tools are prevalent in established software, websites, and communications such as email, social media, office programs, and text messaging. Generative AI is increasingly common, and ministers are exploring ways to utilize it in their ministries and personal lives. This regional addendum to the *Ministerial Code of Ethics* provides an overview of ethical and unethical usage of AI.

All ministers are expected to demonstrate "strong moral character and personal integrity."[1] This demands honesty in your written and spoken presentations: refrain from plagiarism, properly cite and credit the words and ideas of others, and share your God-given, authentic voice that only you can offer.

Examples of Ethical Uses of AI

- Being personally responsible for any AI-generated content you use and/or share, including verifying and authenticating any AI-generated content
- Condensing your written material and adapting your created materials for public announcements, including event reminders, social media posts, and brief announcements
- Live captioning and translating of meetings, worship services, and events
- Creating meeting summaries, which must be reviewed and corrected if they are to be shared and included in organizational records
- Brainstorming at early stages of sermon, worship, curricula and policy creation

Examples of Unethical Uses of AI

- Writing all or significant parts of sermons, articles, and presentations
- Providing pastoral care primarily with AI
- Entering sensitive information/confidential data into generative AI tools
- Producing or sharing content that is harassing, discriminatory, or exploitative
- Using or sharing content that has not been, or cannot be, verified and authenticated

Ultimately, each minister is responsible for any work created and produced with the assistance of AI and must cite the use of AI appropriately. "Human oversight must remain central to the use of AI. AI may enhance analysis, content creation, or support decision-making, but they should not replace human judgment. Final decisions, especially those affecting people… should be made by users, not AI."[2]

---

[1] *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, line 540.

[2] Texas Christian University Policy, "Artificial Intelligence," From IV. Policy, A. Ethical and Responsible Use, p.3. Policy issued April 14, 2026. https://tcu.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=289&app=pt&source=unspecified&public=true

Crediting AI

- Clearly and explicitly identifying any graphics and images created/generated using AI
- Explicitly identifying services providing captioning/translation
- Crediting the significant use of AI verbally or in writing, including naming the model and version used (such as *ChatGPT*, 2026)[3]

Recognizing Widespread Ethical Concerns of AI

- AI relies heavily on a broad use of copyrighted material, sometimes used without explicit permission
- The massive data centers needed for AI has significant environmental and social impacts
- Misuse and overreliance on AI risks replacing vital human interaction and development

[3] Crediting AI is not necessary if AI assists you in finding other sources which you cite or if you are simply condensing/repackaging your own content