

48-Hour Resolution #1: A Call to the Church for Action Against the Use of Large Language Models in Church Settings

submitted by The Rev. Nic Mather, Rector, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Longview, WA; The Rev. Joseph Peters-Mathews, Vicar, St. Hilda/St. Patrick Episcopal Church, Edmonds, WA; and The Rev. Sabeth Fitzgibbons, Rector, Trinity Parish, Seattle, WA

Resolutions Committee assessment: NO OPINION

Whereas, the Diocese of Olympia affirm God's incarnation as a gift to humanity, demonstrating and commending the importance of human 1:1 relationships, listening, and teaching, as an expression of the goodness of our creation, supporting our health and wellness through being in community with one another, and in those interactions we believe the Holy Spirit works within us, transforming us more and more into the image of the incarnational Christ, thus given the vitality of authentic human interaction experiencing the fullness of life in this creation through our embodied experiences, be it

Resolved, that this 115th Convention of the Diocese of Olympia affirm there is to be no use of Large Language Models in the creation of sermons, prayers, liturgies, or in the offering of pastoral care in the Diocese of Olympia; and be it further

Resolved, that the Diocese of Olympia affirm there are no spiritually beneficial purposes in using Large Language Models in the creation of sermons, prayers, liturgies, or in the offering of pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, that the Diocese of Olympia affirm that Large Language Models continue to be a source of harm to vulnerable members of our communities, in particular those suffering from mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, that the Diocese of Olympia affirm that Large Language Models continue to be a source of negative environmental impact, threatening those most vulnerable to the climate crisis; and be it further

Resolved, that the Diocese of Olympia encourages its deputation to the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church (2027), to include lay and clergy deputies and our Bishop, to speak against any resolutions brought forward by the Task Force on AI in the Episcopal Church that make recommendations in favor of the use of Large Language Models in our churches; and be it further

Resolved, that the Diocese of Olympia will submit the following resolution to the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church (2027) that reflects the affirmations contained herein:

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church affirm God's incarnation as a gift to humanity, demonstrating and commending the importance of human 1:1 relationships, listening, and teaching, as an expression of the goodness of our creation, supporting our health and wellness through being in community with one another, and in those interactions we believe the Holy Spirit works within us, transforming us more and more into the image of the incarnational Christ, thus given the vitality of authentic human interaction experiencing the fullness of life in this creation through our embodied experiences, and be it further

Resolved, That the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm there is to be no use of Large Language Models in the creation of sermons, prayers, liturgies, or in the offering of pastoral care in The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm there are no spiritually beneficial purposes in using Large Language Models in the creation of sermons, prayers, liturgies, or in the offering of pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm that Large Language Models continue to be a source of harm to vulnerable members of our communities, in particular those suffering from mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, That the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm that Large Language Models continue to be a source of negative environmental impact, threatening those most vulnerable to climate change.

Explanation: The conversation around the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), specifically the use of Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT and others, has become an important touchpoint in our modern understanding of how quickly technology advances and what efforts to install safety measures are (and are not) in place to address its use and misuse. With the rapid rise in use of AI programs, and specifically the widespread use of LLMs, the guardrails have failed to keep pace, creating an untenable situation where AI/LLMs continue to envelop our daily lives and create¹ irreparable² harm³ towards⁴ others⁵ due to their continued lack of oversight or regulation.⁶

These harms present a source of great pastoral concern and encourage us to take an immediate pause and analyze the environment we find ourselves in.

While there may be legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence in specific, task-based settings, in which understanding large amounts of quantifiable data or summarizing inputs can be

useful when an AI tool is created specifically for that task, the use of Large Language Models like ChatGPT and others have continually shown their failure to be accurate sources of information, especially when the information being sought expands beyond easily quantifiable data points.⁷ While there is certainly an appeal for removing doubt in many areas of our life, our faith expression is in many ways an embrace of doubt through our practice of humility in our faith, an approach that is impossible to emulate in a Large Language Model.

This is especially concerning when various tools (like the Episcopal-affiliated chatbot "EpiscoBOT") purport to write prayers and sermons that rely on vague platitudes and a cursory understanding of Christ's call to his followers, all while using a generic and disconnected voice. These tools have even been discovered to cite made-up Bible verses when presenting the requested material.⁸

The use of these tools can cause real spiritual harm due to their disconnect from God and from the soul of the human being tasked with creating our connection points between God and God's creation through prayer, sermons, liturgy, and when offering pastoral care, whether the users of these tools be lay leaders or ordained clergy.

A multitude of resources⁹ already exists and is continually being developed for our use to assist in the task of writing prayers, sermons,¹⁰ liturgies,¹¹ and in the offering of pastoral care, that draws on our real, lived human experience and our connections with one another. Grounding ourselves in the incarnational reality of our faith is key to our faith formation as experienced through our practice of prayer, *lex orandi*, *lex credendi* (the way people pray shapes their beliefs).

We follow Jesus Christ in our lives and our work as the church. Jesus was not content with sitting on the sidelines, offering no commentary, as the world around him continued to change and evolve. Jesus spoke against the unchecked authority and power wielded by the ruling, wealthy elites, and we find ourselves in a position to do this today as developers of Large Language Models grow in immense wealth and influence with little standing in their way.

As a church, we must be bold in speaking against the evils of our modern time. When faced with technology that not only threatens the most vulnerable in our communities, but also threatens to sever human connections with one another and our connection with God, while simultaneously being touted as a "creative" engine when it is often merely regurgitating plagiarized material,¹² we must speak out with a firm and clear voice that AI in the form of Large Language Models has no place in the church.¹³

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgerwp7rdlvo>

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<https://apnews.com/article/ai-chatbot-teens-congress-chatgpt-character-ce3959b6a3ea1a4997bflccabb4f0de2>

³ <https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental-impact-0117>

⁴ <https://hbr.org/2024/07/the-uneven-distribution-of-ais-environmental-impacts>

⁵ <https://builtin.com/artificial-intelligence/risks-of-artificial-intelligence>

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<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/05/why-regulating-ai-can-be-surprisingly-straightforward-providing-you-have-eternal-vigilance/>

⁷ <https://mindmatters.ai/2024/04/large-language-models-are-often-wrong-never-in-doubt/>

⁸ "Fr. Larry even warned us that we would regularly find mistakes—'hallucinations'—in what Cathy produced: 'We know that about 10 percent of the time she is simply making things up,' including, he was quick to add, completely fabricated quotations.",

<https://www.christiancentury.org/features/priesthood-all-chatbots>

⁹ <https://www.venite.app/home>

¹⁰ <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons-that-work/>

¹¹ <https://www.episcopalcommonprayer.org/>

¹² <https://www.skadden.com/insights/publications/2025/05/copyright-office-report>

¹³ <https://www.christiancentury.org/features/priesthood-all-chatbots>