



# A WORSHIP LEADERS GUIDE TO AI

by Doug Gould, Worship MD

As with any development in technology, we are confronted with a choice of when, where, and how to use it for our benefit and, ultimately, for the benefit of mankind. We must ask ourselves, will this invention, discovery, or innovation help or hinder our productivity and development?

AI (Artificial Intelligence) has been around for a while in apps like ChatGPT, for example, and in many of the applications that foreshadowed the development of AI.

Siri, Alexa, GPS, self-driving automobiles, search engines, facial recognition, robotic surgery – the list goes on and will continue to grow. Many of us have become reliant on these apps for their efficiency and access. So much so that we would be literally lost without them. AI can accomplish tasks and projects in less time than it takes to make a cup of coffee. It appears its capabilities are far beyond what we thought it could do, and we can only imagine what the future holds for this technology.

As for the focus of this article, AI is being utilized in worship in many ways. Some are good, and in my opinion, some are not. I'm not here to judge how you may or may not be using it, but rather to ask: When is it practical? When is it right or not? Does it make us better, or does it replace what our hearts and spirits have to say? What are the ethical, spiritual, and moral considerations when applying it to our service and walk with God?

### **WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?**

A notable case of utilizing AI in worship is the Congregational Church of Patchogue in Long Island, New York. On July 14, 2024, Reverend Dwight Lee Wolter conducted a service entirely written by ChatGPT. It included calls to worship, invocations, prayers, scripture readings, sermons, hymns, preludes, postludes, and benedictions. The service saw good attendance and left congregants more pleased than expected, indicating a growing curiosity about AI in worship.

See: [Artificial Intelligence in the Pulpit: A Church Service Written Entirely by AI - United Church of Christ](#)

### **TO AI OR NOT TO AI**

John 4:23 states, *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."*

In essence, John 4:23 encourages believers to move beyond external, ritualistic forms of worship and to cultivate a deeper, more authentic relationship with God through the Spirit and in accordance with His truth.

Will your application of AI satisfy the hunger and thirst for the Lord in the same way a human soul and spirit can?

Only you can answer the question of whether the assignments and applications, prayers, and projects, sermons, and services are helping you to be a worshipper in spirit and truth or hindering your walk with HIM by letting *“the machine”* be a substitute for your heart and mind.

Philippians 3:3 states, *“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.”*

See: [John Piper writes a 30 Second Prayer with ChatGPT](#)



### **UTILIZING AI IN WORSHIP**

In this first part of AI in Worship, I want to show examples of where I believe AI should NOT be applied. The second part of the article will illustrate very practical applications of this technology and how, in my opinion, it serves the church body, staff, and membership.

When we rely on AI to research and then write the sermon, prayer, or lesson, in my opinion, we’ve strayed too far. AI-generated content lacks the Holy Spirit’s guidance and inspiration, and in no way reflects what our hearts feel or what our experiences reveal. It lacks human connection: mind, body, heart, and spirit.

Pastors can use AI to draft sermons, research scripture, word studies, help with exegesis pulling insights from various commentaries, and shorten the time necessary to prepare the teaching. No problem with that!

The examples below help with transcription, content creation, and communication, freeing church leaders to focus on spiritual guidance:

- TurboScribe
- Sermon Scribe
- Bible.ai Assistant

See: [AI and the Church: Possibilities and Concerns | Breeze ChMS](#)

Various discussions online emphasize the need for discernment, with some setting guidelines to ensure AI serves as a tool, not a replacement for spiritual connection.

See: [AI Can Preach and Sing, so Why Can't it Worship God? - Christianity Today](#)

This is not to say that AI should be dismissed out of hand as there are many, many ways that AI can serve the church in practical ways.



See: [Rick Rubin on AI](#)

For worship leaders, using AI to find songs related to a theme — grace, for example — can help identify content that supports the pastor’s message, allowing more time to rehearse hymns, choruses, and songs. Chord chart generation and transposing songs are great applications for AI. However, when AI creates songs for our worship, I think we must draw the line.

See: [AI and Worship Leaders: Harmful or Helpful WorshipMinistryTraining.com](#)

When preparing for the service, you may want to sift through the 300,000 songs of CCLI using AI to find the best songs on a topic for your set list. It can then take those songs and apply the appropriate key for congregational participation. [The lyrics can then be fed into an AI agent for slide creation.](#) There are programs to help create visual worship backgrounds like [MidJourney](#) or Kaiber.

## **DOES YOUR CHURCH HAVE A BONA FIDE VIDEO EDITOR OR LIGHTING TECHNICIAN?**

You now can auto-generate announcements with tools like Pictory, Descript, and Lumen5. Upload raw video or text (i.e. Join us for Sunday's message on faith from Hebrews 11), and the app creates a short social media video promo just right for your livestream. Lighting can also be controlled by [intelligent apps](#), which can help churches without experienced lighting technicians or enhance the capabilities of an existing lighting system.

**Benefit:** You don't need a dedicated video editor to create polished, drag-and-drop videos.

- For camera automation, churches with limited volunteers and experience can use OBS Studio with an auto-scene-switching plug-in, ManyCam, or PTZ Optics cameras with auto tracking.

**Benefit:** Looks professional without needing a dedicated camera operator.

- You can add AI-generated live captioning for accessibility in real time using a basic mic input with a tool known as Web Captioner.

**Benefit:** Makes livestreams accessible to hard-of-hearing viewers without sound.

- I don't find it appropriate to have AI write your sermon, but tools such as ChatGPT+Descript and Otter.ai can summarize it and adapt key points into clear, easy-to-understand social media posts.

**Benefit:** Weekly outreach without hours of work.

- As these examples show, AI can improve productivity in many ways in which AI can speed up our productivity, but if it ever replaces the human, heartfelt, spiritual connection to our Lord and Savior, I believe we have crossed a line.

We need discernment of where AI is appropriate and where it is not. AMEN? When writing songs, sermons, and prayers, be true and authentic. A machine will never have a soul and doesn't have human experience no matter how much data we can feed into it. Be very careful when you are applying it. Always double check AI's output, as things can be incorrect, and be aware of copyright infringement.

## AI-DRIVEN TOOLS SUMMARY FOR SMALL CHURCHES

Function	Tool Recommendation	Free or Paid?
Slide/Text Automation	ChatGPT, Canva	Free & Paid versions
Captions/Subtitles	Web Captioner, Descript	Free tiers available
Video Editing/Recaps	Pictory, Descript, Opus Clip	Free/Paid options
Sound Mixing	iZotope Neutron, LALAL.AI	Paid (free trials)
Sermon Titles/Social	ChatGPT, Jasper	Free/Paid
Camera Auto-Tracking	OBS + plugin, PTZOptics	Free plugin, Paid cams

### 💡 FINAL TIP: START SMALL

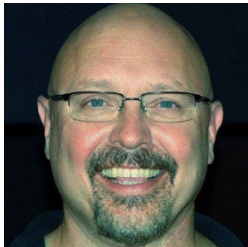
You don't need a full AI-powered suite from the start. Try one or two tools—like:

- Auto-captions with **Web Captioner**
- Sermon summaries via **ChatGPT**
- Slide automation with **Canva Magic Design**

### MORE MATERIAL FOR YOU TO PONDER

- [Derek Schuurman on Using AI in Church](#)
- [FAQs: What is Generative AI and How Can It Help Ministry Leaders](#)
- [Generative AI Through the Christian Theological Lens](#)
- [Three Takeaways on How Pastors Can Use AI](#)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Doug Gould is the CEO and Founder of Worship MD and has been a Pro Audio and Music Technology industry veteran for nearly 30 years, serving in management roles at Shure, Tascam, and E-Mu Systems. Doug has served as a worship leader, musician, and sound tech at various churches throughout his career.

Over the last 18 years, Doug has been a very effective presenter at hundreds of worship conferences throughout North America and beyond, focusing his experience on consulting and teaching.

Doug can be reached at [worshipmd.com](http://worshipmd.com) or by email at [doug@worshipmd.com](mailto:doug@worshipmd.com). You can also find him on Facebook at [facebook.com/officialworshipmd](https://facebook.com/officialworshipmd).