

Church AI Safety & Liability Protection Guide

ChurchWiseAI LTD Last Updated: March 2026

This guide helps your church use ChurchWiseAI's AI voice agent and chatbot responsibly and protect your congregation, your staff, and your church from liability. It is written in plain language for pastors and church administrators -- not lawyers. However, we strongly recommend sharing this document with your church's legal counsel and insurance provider.

Why This Document Matters

Your church is using AI to serve your congregation. That is a powerful, compassionate decision. AI can answer the phone at 2 AM when a grieving widow calls. It can gently point someone toward crisis resources when they type "I don't want to be here anymore" into a chat window at midnight.

But AI is a tool, not a person. It does not have pastoral judgment. It does not know your congregation the way you do. And when something goes wrong -- when a congregant in crisis slips through, when a conversation is misunderstood, when someone claims the AI gave harmful advice -- your church needs to be prepared.

ChurchWiseAI has built robust safety systems into every layer of the product. This guide explains what the AI does automatically, what your church must do, and how to protect yourself if an incident ever occurs.

1. What ChurchWiseAI Does Automatically

You do not need to configure any of these features. They are always on, cannot be disabled, and work identically across voice calls and chat conversations.

AI Disclosure

Every interaction begins with a clear disclosure that the caller or visitor is speaking with an AI, not a human. For voice calls, the greeting includes language such as: "I'm an AI assistant for [Church Name], and this call may be recorded." For chat, the interface clearly identifies the responder as an AI care agent. This disclosure meets the requirements of California SB 243 and New York S 3008, which mandate that AI chatbots identify themselves as artificial intelligence.

Triple-Layer Crisis Detection

ChurchWiseAI uses three independent safety layers to detect crisis situations. If any single layer detects a crisis signal, the safety response activates. All three layers must fail for a crisis to go undetected -- and we have designed them so that is extremely unlikely.

Layer 1 -- LLM Prompt Instructions. The AI's core instructions include a detailed safety escalation protocol with four levels:

Level	Trigger Examples	AI Response
Level 1: Inappropriate	Sexual comments, objectifying language	Firm redirect, flags the conversation
Level 2: Persistent Abuse	Repeated hostility, profanity, harassment	Clear boundary, then disengagement after two warnings
Level 3: Threats of Violence	"Burn the church down," threats to harm others	Immediate 988 referral, admin notification, conversation ends
Level 4: Self-Harm / Suicidal Ideation	"I want to die," "what's the point," "ending my life"	Immediate crisis resources (988, 741741, 911), plus pastoral support offer

For Level 4 (self-harm), the AI is instructed that providing crisis resources is NON-NEGOTIABLE. It must include all three resources in its response -- the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, the Crisis Text Line, and 911. It cannot skip them, substitute them with prayer, or treat suicidal ideation as only a spiritual matter.

Layer 2 -- Server-Side Pattern Detection. Before the AI even generates a response, the system scans every incoming message against a comprehensive library of crisis patterns. These patterns are based on:

- **C-SSRS (Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale)** -- the gold standard for suicide risk screening used by clinicians worldwide
- **QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)** -- standard suicide prevention methodology
- **SAMHSA guidelines** for AI-assisted crisis detection
- **California SB 243 and New York S 3008** requirements for AI chatbot crisis detection

The pattern library includes direct language ("I want to kill myself"), euphemistic language ("I'm tired of fighting," "I just want the pain to stop"), teen-coded language ("I can't do this anymore"), elderly euphemisms ("I've lived long enough," "I don't want to be a burden"), and religious framing ("God is calling me home," "I'll be with Jesus soon").

When Layer 2 detects a match, it injects a crisis override directive into the AI's instructions that forces the response to lead with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The AI cannot ask clarifying questions first. It cannot ask "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?" It must provide the resource immediately.

Layer 3 -- Hardcoded Safety Net. If the AI's response does not contain crisis resources after Layers 1 and 2 have flagged the conversation, the system automatically appends crisis resource information to the response before it reaches the caller or visitor. This is a failsafe that operates independently of the AI model. Even if the AI model fails completely, the crisis resources still appear.

Automatic Notifications

When a crisis or safety concern is detected, ChurchWiseAI immediately sends notifications to your church:

- **Email alert** to the admin email address on file
- **SMS alert** to the admin phone number on file (if configured)
- **Internal alert** to ChurchWiseAI's support team (for pattern monitoring)

These notifications include the caller's phone number (voice) or session identifier (chat), the detected concern category, and a link to the full conversation in your admin dashboard.

Threat Detection and Auto-Termination

For voice calls, if a caller makes direct threats of violence (bomb threats, shooting threats, threats to harm specific people), the system:

1. Delivers a safety message with crisis resources
2. Automatically terminates the call
3. Sends immediate notifications to the church admin and ChurchWiseAI support
4. Logs the incident to the moderation violations database

This happens at the server level, before the AI model processes the threat. The AI cannot be manipulated into continuing a threatening conversation.

Domestic Violence Detection

The system detects indicators of domestic violence, including direct statements ("my husband hits me"), situational language ("I'm not allowed to leave," "he controls my phone"), and trafficking indicators. When detected, the AI provides:

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-7233 (1-800-799-SAFE)
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988
- **911** for immediate danger
- An offer to connect with the church's pastoral team

Moderation and Abuse Prevention

The chatbot includes an automatic escalation system that protects both your congregation and your church from misuse:

Stage	Trigger	What Happens	Duration
Warning	First abusive message	AI calmly redirects the conversation	Immediate

Cooldown	2 violations in a session	User temporarily unable to send messages	5 minutes
Temporary Block	4 violations	User blocked from the chatbot	24 hours
Permanent Block	7 violations or a direct threat	User permanently blocked; admin notified	Indefinite (admin can unblock)

Complete Conversation Logging

Every voice call and chat conversation is fully logged, including:

- Complete transcripts (voice calls are transcribed in real time)
- AI-generated conversation summaries
- Timestamps for every message
- Safety flags and their categories
- Any prayer requests, visitor contacts, or callback requests extracted from the conversation

All logs are accessible in your admin dashboard at [churchwiseai.com/admin/\[your-token\]](https://churchwiseai.com/admin/[your-token]) under the **Calls** tab (voice) and conversation logs (chat).

Sensitive Topic Redirection

For topics where AI should not take a position -- including questions about LGBTQ+ theology, political issues, divisive doctrine, interfaith comparisons, and church discipline situations -- the AI does not offer an opinion. Instead, it acknowledges the importance of the question and offers to connect the person with your pastor directly, using your church's configured scheduling (Cal.com appointments or callback requests).

2. What Your Church MUST Do

ChurchWiseAI's safety systems are comprehensive, but they are not a substitute for human pastoral care. The AI detects and refers. Your church must follow through.

Designate a Crisis Response Contact

This is the single most important thing in this document.

You must designate at least one person (ideally two) who will:

- Receive and review safety notification emails and SMS alerts
- Review flagged conversations within **24 hours** of notification
- Follow up with congregants who have been flagged for crisis concerns

- Be reachable by phone during business hours for urgent situations

This person should be your senior pastor, an executive pastor, or a trusted office administrator. They do not need to be a licensed counselor -- they need to be someone who will take a flagged conversation seriously and connect the person with appropriate help.

Action item: Enter this person's email and phone number in your admin dashboard under **Settings > Notifications**. Keep this information current. If your crisis contact leaves the church or changes roles, update it immediately.

Maintain Your Notification Settings

The safety system can only notify you if your contact information is correct. At minimum, keep the following updated in your admin dashboard:

- **Admin email address** -- receives all safety alerts, weekly summaries, and flagged conversation notifications
- **Admin phone number** -- receives SMS alerts for critical safety flags
- **Pastor name** -- used by the AI when offering to connect visitors with pastoral staff
- **Pastor availability** -- used when offering callback scheduling ("Pastor Sarah is usually available Tuesday through Thursday")

Respond to Flagged Conversations Promptly

When you receive a safety notification:

1. **Log into your dashboard** at `churchwiseai.com/admin/[your-token]`
2. **Review the flagged conversation** under the Calls or Requests tab
3. **Assess the situation** -- is this person in immediate danger, ongoing distress, or was this a false positive?
4. **Follow up** -- call, email, or visit the person if you have their contact information
5. **Document your response** -- note what action you took and when (this is important for liability protection)

Target response time: Within 24 hours for all flagged conversations. Within 1 hour for conversations flagged as "critical" (threats of violence, active suicidal ideation).

Keep a Referral List Ready

The AI provides national crisis resources (988, Crisis Text Line, 911, Domestic Violence Hotline). But your congregation also needs local resources. Prepare and maintain a list of:

- Licensed counselors in your area (especially those who work with churches)
- Local crisis centers and hotlines
- Domestic violence shelters
- Substance abuse treatment programs
- Grief support groups
- Financial assistance programs

You can add local resources to your church's knowledge base through the admin dashboard. The AI will then share these local resources alongside the national ones when appropriate.

Review Conversations Regularly

Do not wait for safety flags. Review your AI conversations at least weekly:

- **Calls tab** -- scan recent voice call summaries for anything that needs follow-up
- **Requests tab** -- review prayer requests, callback requests, and visitor contacts
- **Care tab** -- check for any care needs that were captured but not yet addressed

This regular review helps you catch situations that the AI flagged at a lower level, identify recurring themes in your congregation's needs, and ensure the AI is representing your church well.

Train Your Staff

Anyone with access to the admin dashboard should understand:

- How to read and interpret safety flags
- Where to find conversation transcripts
- Your church's protocol for responding to flagged conversations
- When to escalate to the senior pastor or legal counsel
- How to use the callback and scheduling features to follow up with congregants

ChurchWiseAI provides documentation and can schedule a training walkthrough for your team. Contact support@churchwiseai.com.

Inform Your Insurance Provider

Notify your church's liability insurance carrier that you are using AI-powered communication tools. Provide them with:

- This document
- The ChurchWiseAI AI Governance & Data Trust Policy (available at churchwiseai.com/docs/AI_GOVERNANCE_AND_DATA_POLICY.pdf)
- A description of what the AI does (answers calls, responds to chat messages, provides information about church programs, detects and refers crisis situations)

Most church insurance policies cover communication activities. However, your carrier may have specific requirements or recommendations. It is far better to have this conversation proactively than after an incident.

Do NOT Disable Safety Features

ChurchWiseAI's crisis detection, safety referrals, and moderation systems cannot be disabled through the admin dashboard. This is intentional. If you customize your AI's persona, greeting, or knowledge base, the safety systems

continue to operate independently. You cannot instruct the AI to stop providing crisis resources or to ignore threats.

3. Recommended Disclaimers

These are copy-paste-ready disclaimers your church can use when sharing your AI care tools with your congregation. Customize the bracketed sections.

Website Disclaimer (for your chatbot or care page)

Place this near the chat widget or on your care page (e.g., [churchwiseai.com/care/\[your-church\]](https://churchwiseai.com/care/[your-church])):

AI Care Assistant Disclaimer

This chat is powered by ChurchWiseAI, an artificial intelligence assistant. It is not a licensed counselor, therapist, or medical professional. It cannot provide diagnoses, treatment plans, or professional advice.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact:

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- Emergency: Call 911

This AI assistant can help with information about [Church Name]'s programs, services, and ministries. For personal pastoral care, please contact our church office at [phone number] or ask the assistant to schedule a conversation with our pastoral team.

Conversations are recorded and reviewed by church staff to ensure quality and safety. By using this service, you consent to this recording.

Phone Greeting Addition

If you customize your voice agent's greeting, include language similar to:

Thank you for calling [Church Name]. You are speaking with an AI assistant. This call may be recorded. For immediate emergencies, please hang up and call 911. How can I help you today?

Bulletin or Email Disclaimer

When sharing your AI care link in church communications:

New: 24/7 AI Care Assistant

[Church Name] now offers a 24/7 AI care assistant to help answer your questions about our church, connect you with ministries, and submit prayer requests anytime -- day or night.

Visit: [your care page URL]

Call: [your AI phone number]

Please note: This is an AI assistant, not a human counselor. For urgent needs, pastoral emergencies, or mental health crises, please call our church office at [number] or dial 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Social Media Post Disclaimer

When promoting your AI care tools on social media:

We are excited to share a new way to connect with [Church Name] 24/7! Our AI care assistant can answer questions, take prayer requests, and help you find the right ministry for you -- anytime, day or night.

Note: This is an AI-powered tool and is not a substitute for professional counseling or pastoral care. If you are in crisis, call 988 or 911.

Try it: [link]

4. Liability Shield Language

These templates provide stronger legal protection. We recommend having your church's attorney review and customize them before use.

Sample "Terms of AI Assistant Use"

Add this to your church website, linked from your chatbot page:

TERMS OF AI ASSISTANT USE — [CHURCH NAME]

Last updated: [Date]

1. NATURE OF SERVICE

[Church Name] provides an AI-powered care assistant ("the Assistant") through ChurchWiseAI technology. The Assistant is an artificial intelligence program. It is not a human, not a licensed counselor, not a medical professional, and

not a substitute for professional care of any kind.

2. NOT PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Nothing communicated by the Assistant constitutes medical advice, psychiatric advice, legal advice, financial advice, or professional counseling. The Assistant provides general information about [Church Name]'s programs, services, and ministries. It may offer spiritual encouragement consistent with our church's beliefs, but this does not constitute professional pastoral counseling.

3. CRISIS SITUATIONS

The Assistant is programmed to detect indicators of crisis (including but not limited to suicidal ideation, self-harm, domestic violence, and threats of harm) and to provide referrals to professional crisis services including the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, Crisis Text Line, and emergency services (911). These automated referrals are not a substitute for professional assessment or treatment.

4. RECORDING AND REVIEW

All conversations with the Assistant (voice and text) are recorded, transcribed, and stored securely. Authorized church staff may review these conversations for quality assurance, safety monitoring, and pastoral follow-up. By using the Assistant, you consent to this recording and review.

5. DATA HANDLING

Conversation data is stored securely by ChurchWiseAI using industry-standard encryption. Data is not sold to third parties. Data is not used to train AI models. For full details, see ChurchWiseAI's privacy policy at churchwiseai.com/privacy.

6. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

[Church Name] and ChurchWiseAI provide the Assistant "as is" without warranty of any kind. Neither [Church Name] nor ChurchWiseAI shall be liable for any damages arising from reliance on information provided by the Assistant. The Assistant may occasionally provide inaccurate or incomplete information. Users are encouraged to verify important information directly with church staff.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By using the Assistant, you acknowledge that you have read and understood these terms, that you understand you are communicating with an artificial intelligence, and that you will seek professional help for any medical, psychiatric, legal, or financial matters.

Church Board Resolution Template

Present this to your church board or elders for formal approval:

RESOLUTION: ADOPTION OF AI COMMUNICATION TOOLS

WHEREAS [Church Name] seeks to serve its congregation and community by being available and responsive at all times;

WHEREAS ChurchWiseAI provides AI-powered voice and chat tools that can answer questions, receive prayer requests, and connect people with church resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;

WHEREAS ChurchWiseAI's platform includes built-in safety systems for crisis detection, mandatory referral to professional crisis services (988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, Crisis Text Line, 911), automatic notification of church leadership, and content moderation;

WHEREAS the use of such tools requires responsible oversight and clear protocols for human follow-up;

BE IT RESOLVED that [Church Name] hereby:

1. Approves the use of ChurchWiseAI's AI voice agent and chatbot for congregational communication and care.
2. Designates [Name, Title] as the primary Crisis Response Contact responsible for reviewing safety-flagged conversations within 24 hours and coordinating follow-up. Designates [Name, Title] as the secondary contact.
3. Commits to maintaining current notification settings (email and phone) in the ChurchWiseAI admin dashboard at all times.
4. Commits to weekly review of AI conversations by [Name/Role].
5. Directs [Name/Role] to notify our insurance provider of the adoption of these tools and to provide them with the Church AI Safety & Liability Protection Guide.
6. Adopts the "Terms of AI Assistant Use" for publication on the church website.
7. Directs [Name/Role] to maintain a current list of local counseling and crisis referral resources in the AI's knowledge base.
8. Will review this resolution and the church's AI safety protocols annually.

Adopted by [Board/Session/Elders/Deacons] on [Date].

Signed: _____
[Name], [Title]

Insurance Notification Letter Template

Send this to your church liability insurance provider:

[Date]

[Insurance Company Name]

[Address]

RE: Notification of AI Communication Tool Adoption – Policy #[Number]

Dear [Agent/Underwriter Name],

I am writing to inform you that [Church Name] has adopted an AI-powered communication platform (ChurchWiseAI) to assist with congregational care. This letter describes the technology and the safeguards in place.

WHAT THE AI DOES:

- Answers phone calls to our church number using an AI voice agent
- Responds to chat messages on our church's care page
- Provides information about church services, programs, and ministries
- Receives prayer requests and visitor contact information
- Detects crisis situations (suicidal ideation, domestic violence, threats) and provides mandatory referrals to professional crisis services

SAFEGUARDS:

- The AI identifies itself as artificial intelligence in every interaction
- Crisis detection is based on clinical screening standards (C-SSRS, QPR) and operates at three independent layers
- All conversations are recorded and available for review
- Church staff are notified immediately when safety concerns are detected
- The AI explicitly states it is not a counselor and cannot provide professional advice
- Moderation systems prevent misuse and automatically block abusive users
- The AI cannot be configured to disable safety features

HUMAN OVERSIGHT:

- [Name] serves as our designated Crisis Response Contact
- Flagged conversations are reviewed within 24 hours
- All conversations are reviewed weekly by church staff
- We maintain a current referral list of local counselors and crisis services

VENDOR INFORMATION:

- ChurchWiseAI LTD – churchwiseai.com
- AI Governance & Data Policy available at:
churchwiseai.com/docs/AI_GOVERNANCE_AND_DATA_POLICY.pdf

Please advise if this affects our coverage or if additional documentation is needed. We are committed to responsible use of this technology and welcome any recommendations you may have.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Church Name]

[Phone] | [Email]

5. Incident Response Protocol

If a congregant or community member reports that they were harmed in connection with an AI interaction, follow these steps immediately.

Step 1: Prioritize the Person

Before anything else -- before you pull transcripts, before you call your lawyer, before you contact ChurchWiseAI -- attend to the person. If they are in crisis, help them access professional support. If they are upset, listen. The legal and technical steps below are important, but the person comes first.

Step 2: Preserve the Record

1. **Log into your admin dashboard** at `churchwiseai.com/admin/[your-token]`
2. **Navigate to the Calls tab** (voice) or locate the conversation (chat)
3. **Find the specific conversation** using the date, phone number, or the person's name if they provided it
4. **Take screenshots or export the transcript** -- do not rely solely on the dashboard for long-term records
5. **Note the conversation ID and timestamp** for reference in any communications

ChurchWiseAI retains all conversation data in your dashboard. However, creating your own copy ensures you have the record even if there are service interruptions.

Step 3: Document What Happened

Create a written record that includes:

- ☐ Date and time the person reported the concern
- ☐ Name and contact information of the person (if known)
- ☐ Their description of what happened (in their own words)
- ☐ The date and approximate time of the AI interaction in question
- ☐ The channel (voice call or chat)
- ☐ Any specific AI statements they found harmful or inaccurate
- ☐ Any actions the person took as a result of the AI interaction
- ☐ Whether the AI provided crisis resources (check the transcript)

- ☐ Whether safety flags were triggered (check the dashboard)
- ☐ Whether your church was notified at the time (check email/SMS records)
- ☐ What follow-up your church has already provided

Step 4: Review the Transcript

Pull the full transcript from the dashboard and review it carefully:

- Did the AI identify itself as AI?
- Did the AI provide accurate information?
- If the conversation involved crisis language, did the AI provide 988, Crisis Text Line, and 911 referrals?
- Did the AI overstep its role (e.g., attempt to provide counseling, make promises, offer medical advice)?
- Were safety notifications sent to your church admin? When? Were they acted upon?

Step 5: Determine if Legal Counsel is Needed

Contact your church's attorney if any of the following are true:

- The person claims physical or psychological harm resulting from the AI interaction
- The person has retained their own attorney
- The person is threatening legal action
- The incident involves a minor
- The incident involves allegations of abuse, neglect, or mandatory reporting obligations
- The conversation transcript shows the AI failed to provide crisis resources when it should have
- You received a safety notification but did not act on it within 24 hours

Step 6: Contact ChurchWiseAI Support

Email support@churchwiseai.com with:

- Subject line: "Safety Incident Report -- [Church Name]"
- The conversation ID and timestamp
- A brief description of the reported concern
- Whether you have involved legal counsel

ChurchWiseAI will:

- Review the conversation and safety system logs
- Determine whether the safety systems functioned correctly
- Provide a technical incident report if requested
- Cooperate fully with any investigation or legal proceeding

Step 7: Communicate Appropriately

- **To the affected person:** Acknowledge their concern, explain what steps you are taking, and offer direct pastoral support. Do not admit fault or make promises about outcomes.
- **To your congregation:** In most cases, individual incidents do not require congregational communication. Consult your attorney if you are unsure.
- **To your insurance provider:** Notify them of the incident per your policy's reporting requirements.

Documentation Checklist

Keep a file (physical or digital) for each incident containing:

- ☐ Written account of the person's report
 - ☐ Full conversation transcript (exported from dashboard)
 - ☐ Screenshots of any safety flags or notifications
 - ☐ Record of when your church was notified and when it responded
 - ☐ Notes from any follow-up conversations with the person
 - ☐ Copies of any communications with legal counsel
 - ☐ Copy of any communication with ChurchWiseAI support
 - ☐ Copy of any communication with your insurance provider
 - ☐ Resolution notes (how the matter was resolved)
-

6. What the AI Will NEVER Do

Understanding the AI's boundaries is as important as understanding its capabilities. ChurchWiseAI's AI will never:

Provide medical or psychiatric diagnosis. The AI will not tell someone they have depression, anxiety, PTSD, or any other condition. It will not interpret symptoms. If someone describes symptoms, the AI will encourage them to speak with a healthcare professional and, if appropriate, provide crisis resources.

Prescribe or recommend treatment. The AI will not suggest medications, therapies, or treatment plans. It will not tell someone to start, stop, or change any medical treatment.

Replace professional counseling. The AI offers spiritual encouragement and connects people with church resources. It explicitly tells callers and visitors that it is not a counselor and cannot provide professional advice. For sensitive conversations (grief, marriage difficulties, addiction, mental health), the AI offers to connect the person with your pastor or a professional counselor.

Guarantee outcomes. The AI will not promise healing, recovery, answered prayer, or any specific result. It will not make guarantees on behalf of God, the church, or any person.

Store or share data outside your church's dashboard. Conversation data is stored in ChurchWiseAI's secure database and is accessible only through your church's admin dashboard. Data is not sold, shared with other churches, or used to train AI models. See the AI Governance & Data Trust Policy for full details.

Make commitments on behalf of your church. The AI will not promise that a pastor will call back at a specific time, that the church will provide financial assistance, or that any particular service will be available. It will offer to relay requests and connect people with staff.

Take theological positions on divisive topics. When asked about topics where Christians disagree (LGBTQ+ theology, political issues, specific doctrinal disputes), the AI will acknowledge the importance of the question and offer to connect the person with your pastor. It will not advocate for a position, even if it aligns with your denomination's official stance.

Continue conversations after threats. If someone makes direct threats of violence, the AI terminates the interaction after providing crisis resources. It cannot be persuaded, manipulated, or instructed to continue a threatening conversation.

7. Compliance Checklists

Monthly Review (15 minutes)

Assign this to your Crisis Response Contact or office administrator. Complete on the first Monday of each month.

- ☐ **Notification settings current:** Verify admin email and phone number in dashboard Settings are correct
- ☐ **Safety flags reviewed:** Check for any unreviewed safety-flagged conversations from the past month
- ☐ **Callback requests addressed:** Ensure all callback requests have been followed up on
- ☐ **Prayer requests reviewed:** Check that prayer requests have been read and prayed over
- ☐ **Visitor contacts followed up:** Ensure new visitor contacts have received a personal outreach
- ☐ **Conversation spot-check:** Read 5-10 random conversations to verify AI quality and accuracy
- ☐ **No system errors:** Check that the chatbot and voice agent are functioning (test with a quick call or chat)

Quarterly Review (30 minutes)

Complete in January, April, July, and October.

- ☐ **All monthly items above**
- ☐ **Referral list current:** Update your list of local counselors, crisis centers, and support groups in the AI's knowledge base
- ☐ **Staff training check:** Confirm all dashboard users understand the safety flag review process
- ☐ **Pastor availability updated:** Verify the pastor name and availability text in voice agent settings are still accurate
- ☐ **Church information accurate:** Spot-check that service times, address, and program information in the AI's knowledge base are current
- ☐ **Review any incidents:** If any safety incidents occurred this quarter, review the documentation file and assess whether protocols need to change

- ☐ **Team member audit:** Verify that all team member accounts in the dashboard belong to current staff (remove departed staff)

Annual Review (60 minutes)

Complete each January or at the start of your church's fiscal year.

- ☐ **All monthly and quarterly items above**
- ☐ **Board review:** Present this Safety Guide and your incident log (if any) to the church board or elders
- ☐ **Insurance check-in:** Contact your insurance provider to confirm your AI tool usage is still covered and inquire about any updated recommendations
- ☐ **Legal review:** Have your attorney review your "Terms of AI Assistant Use" and any updates to AI legislation in your state
- ☐ **Policy updates:** Review ChurchWiseAI's AI Governance & Data Policy for any changes (churchwiseai.com/docs)
- ☐ **Crisis contact confirmation:** Reaffirm the designated Crisis Response Contact (or assign a new one if there has been a personnel change)
- ☐ **Training refresh:** Schedule a 15-minute refresher for all staff who use the admin dashboard
- ☐ **State legislation check:** Review whether your state has enacted new AI disclosure or crisis detection requirements (ChurchWiseAI will notify you of major legislative changes, but your own review is prudent)

Understanding the Legal Landscape

This section provides context on the laws and standards that shape AI safety in pastoral settings. This is not legal advice. Consult your attorney for guidance specific to your church and state.

Churches and "Duty of Care"

Churches have a general duty of care to their congregants -- a legal obligation to act reasonably to prevent foreseeable harm. This duty is not the same as a licensed counselor's duty (which includes specific clinical obligations). A church's duty of care means:

- If someone tells your church they are suicidal, your church should take it seriously and connect them with help
- If your church becomes aware of child abuse, your church may have mandatory reporting obligations (varies by state)
- If your church uses tools (including AI) that interact with vulnerable people, your church should ensure those tools have reasonable safety measures

ChurchWiseAI's triple-layer crisis detection, automatic referrals to 988/911, and immediate pastor notification are designed to help your church meet this duty of care. Your church's responsibility is to ensure the human follow-through happens.

Emerging AI Legislation

Several states are enacting laws that specifically address AI chatbots and crisis situations:

- **California SB 243** requires AI chatbots that interact with consumers to detect suicidal ideation and provide crisis referrals. ChurchWiseAI's triple-layer detection system exceeds this requirement.
- **New York S 3008** requires AI systems to disclose their artificial nature and provide crisis resources when mental health concerns are detected. ChurchWiseAI's mandatory AI disclosure and automated crisis referrals meet this requirement.

Additional states are likely to pass similar legislation. ChurchWiseAI monitors these developments and updates its systems to maintain compliance. We will notify your church of any changes that affect your obligations.

Clinical Standards Referenced

ChurchWiseAI's crisis detection patterns are informed by (but do not replace) established clinical screening tools:

- **C-SSRS (Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale):** The most widely used suicide risk screening tool in clinical settings. ChurchWiseAI's pattern library covers the language categories identified by C-SSRS Question 1 (wish to be dead) and Question 2 (suicidal thoughts).
- **QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer):** A widely taught suicide prevention method. ChurchWiseAI's approach mirrors the "Refer" step -- recognizing warning signs and immediately connecting the person with professional resources.
- **SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration):** Federal guidelines for AI-assisted behavioral health tools inform ChurchWiseAI's approach to crisis detection and referral.

ChurchWiseAI is not a clinical tool and does not perform clinical assessments. These standards inform our pattern detection to ensure we catch as many crisis signals as possible and refer people to those who can help.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can the AI actually prevent a suicide? A: No tool -- AI or human -- can guarantee prevention. What ChurchWiseAI does is ensure that anyone who expresses suicidal ideation through your church's AI channels immediately receives the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number and other crisis resources, and that your church is notified so a human can follow up. Studies show that connecting people with crisis resources at the moment of distress saves lives.

Q: What if the AI misses a crisis signal? A: ChurchWiseAI's three-layer detection system is designed so that all three layers must fail for a crisis signal to go undetected. However, no system is perfect. This is why regular human review of conversations is essential. If you discover that a crisis was missed, contact support@churchwiseai.com immediately so we can analyze the conversation and improve our detection patterns.

Q: What if someone sues our church over something the AI said? A: If you have implemented the safeguards in this guide -- clear disclaimers, designated crisis contact, prompt follow-up on flagged conversations, current insurance

notification, and regular reviews -- your church is well-positioned to demonstrate responsible use. Contact your attorney immediately if legal action is threatened, and contact ChurchWiseAI support for a technical incident report.

Q: Are we liable if someone calls our AI number instead of 911? A: Your AI greets callers by identifying itself as AI and, in any emergency context, directs them to call 911. Placing this disclosure in your church materials (bulletins, website, social media) using the templates in Section 3 further demonstrates that your church has taken reasonable steps to inform the public.

Q: Can we use the AI for formal pastoral counseling? A: No. The AI is designed for congregational care -- answering questions, receiving prayer requests, sharing church information, and detecting/referring crisis situations. It is not a counseling tool and should never be presented as one. For counseling, your church should use licensed professionals.

Q: What data does ChurchWiseAI keep, and for how long? A: All conversation data is stored in your church's secure dashboard. Retention policies are detailed in the AI Governance & Data Trust Policy. Your church can request deletion of specific data at any time.

Q: Do we need to get consent from callers before recording? A: The AI discloses at the beginning of every interaction that the call may be recorded. For states that require two-party consent for call recording, this disclosure serves as notification. Consult your attorney regarding your specific state's recording consent laws.

Contact ChurchWiseAI

- **Support email:** support@churchwiseai.com
- **Safety incident reports:** support@churchwiseai.com (Subject: "Safety Incident Report -- [Church Name]")
- **Admin dashboard:** [churchwiseai.com/admin/\[your-token\]](https://churchwiseai.com/admin/[your-token])
- **AI Governance & Data Policy:** churchwiseai.com/docs/AI_GOVERNANCE_AND_DATA_POLICY.pdf
- **Book a training call:** churchwiseai.com/book

Document Control

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	March 2026	Initial document

This document will be reviewed and updated as ChurchWiseAI's safety systems evolve and as new legislation is enacted. Churches will be notified of material changes.