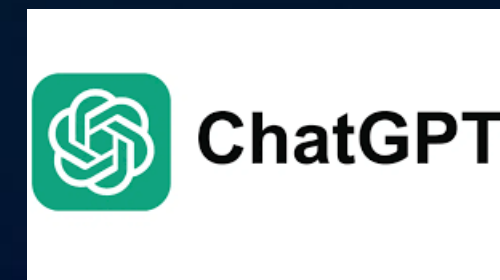
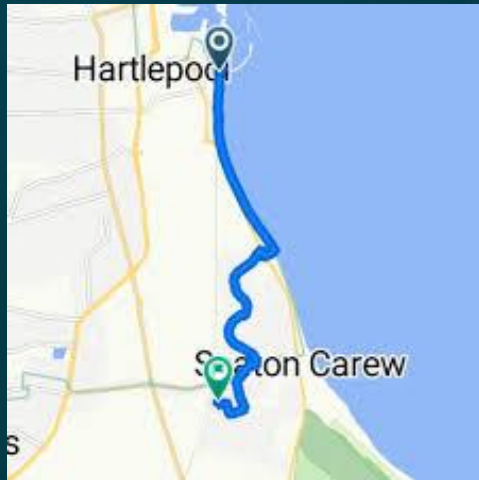
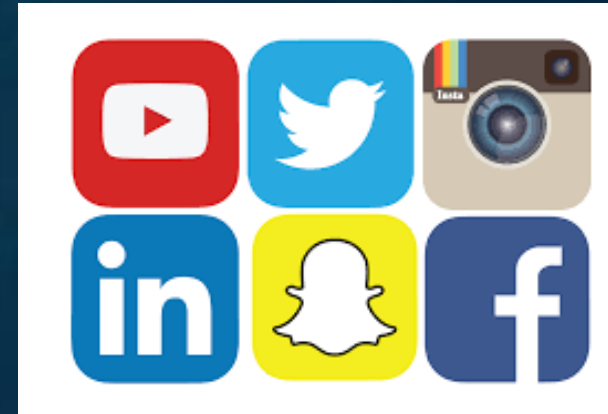
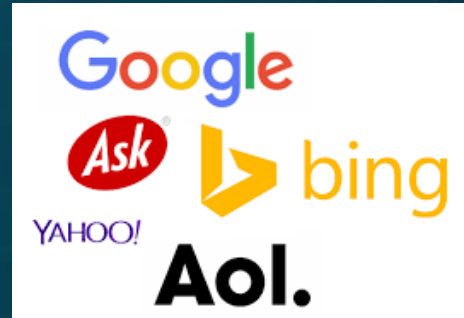


What is Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of a computer or machine to mimic human-like cognitive functions, such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making.



You interact with AI daily





Large Language Models

ChatGPT (Nov 2022) – public interface starts

1 million users in 5 days and over 100 million active users in 2 months

CURRENTLY

More accurate and multimodal (text, images, audio)

Integration into tools we already use (e.g., MS Office, search engines)

Ongoing debates about AI governance and safety

FUTURE

Expect more seamless AI in everyday apps.

Regulations and policies are being developed worldwide.

The “rise” is still in progress—this is just the beginning.

AI Working Group

- Environment
- Theology
- Theological education
- Pastoral and Elderly Care
- Practical Ministry
- Data, Privacy and Governance

Environmental impact of AI

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF AI



ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Training large AI models requires enormous amounts of electricity



WATER USAGE

AI servers generate a lot of heat, and cooling systems often rely on water



E-WASTE & HARDWARE FOOTPRINT

AI needs vast amounts of high-performance hardware

GLOBAL FAIRNESS CONCERNS

AI's benefits and environmental costs are not evenly shared

- The resource extraction and some environmental burdens are often borne by poorer countries. This raises *climate justice* questions — AI's benefits and environmental costs are not evenly shared
- Energy use vs. Net Zero commitments
- local communities affected by water withdrawals
- Does faithfulness to creation limit what tools we adopt or how we adopt them?
- Is convenience (accessibility, outreach) morally weighty enough to justify added environmental cost?
- How do we practise solidarity with communities harmed by mining or water extraction?

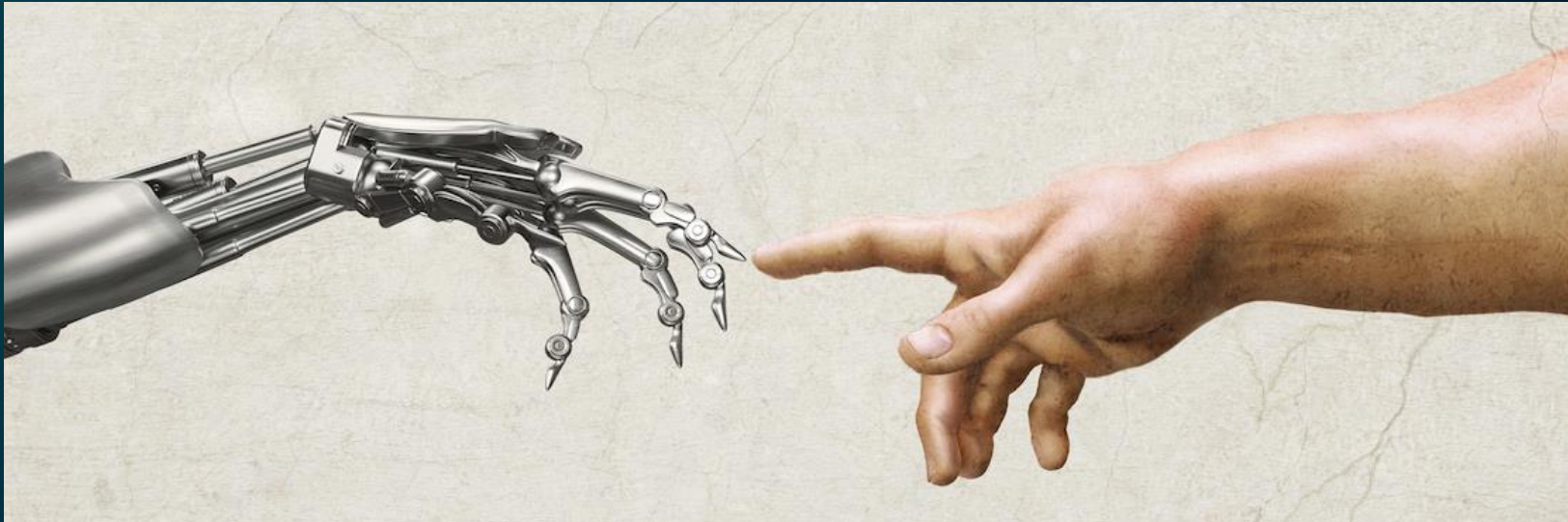
Theology and AI

If humans are uniquely made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), what does it mean machines start to replicate human-like reasoning, creativity, and conversation?

How do Christians discern truth when AI can generate convincing but false or misleading content?

Can AI provide genuine pastoral care, prayer, or preaching?

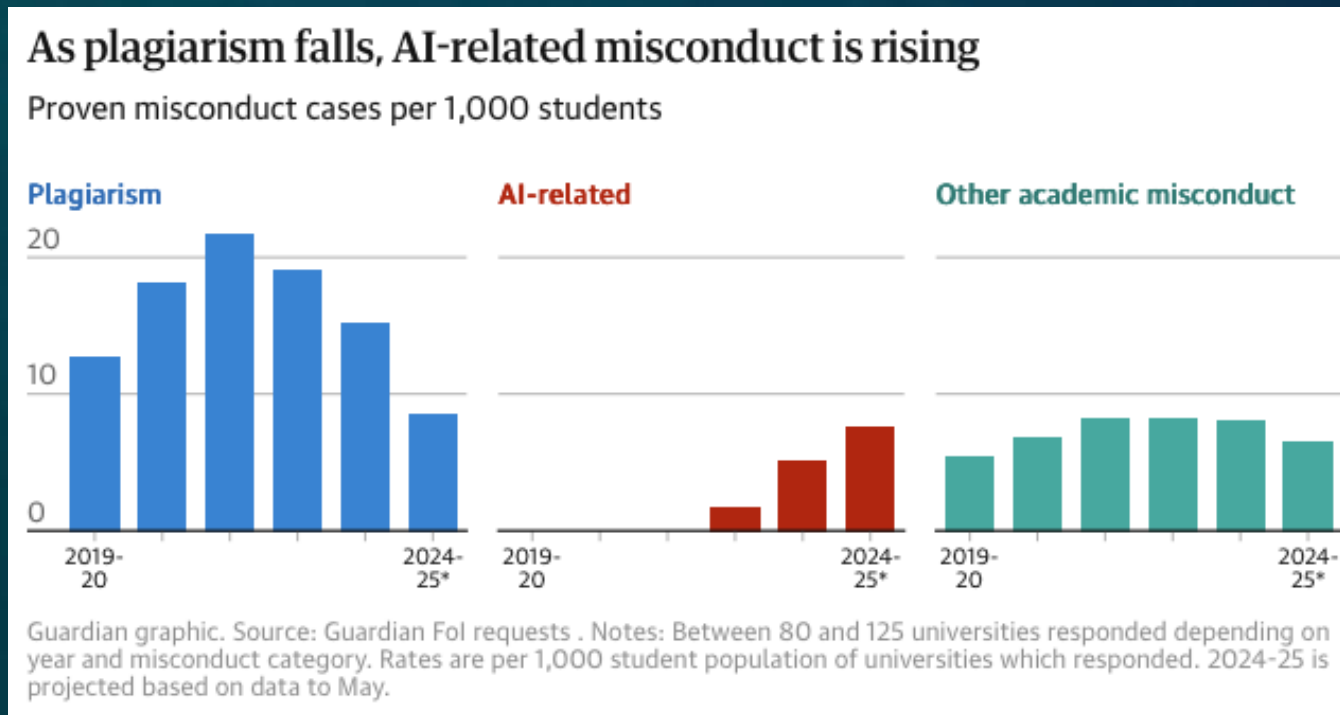
Could AI weaken spiritual disciplines by offering quick answers instead of deeper engagement with God?



Theological Education

What is theological education for — information, formation, or both?

AI can help with information, but formation requires embodied practices - discernment, prayer, community....



“When used well and by a student who knows how to edit the output, AI misuse is very hard to prove.””

Pastoral and Health Care

● Positives

- Early diagnosis & better health outcomes
- Personalised care plans
- Reduced staff admin = more time with residents
- Improved communication (translation, memory aids)

● Risks

- Loss of human touch & relational depth
- Privacy concerns & 'surveillance' feel
- Unequal access (digital gap)
- Job losses or role changes in care sector

● Pastoral Response

- Celebrate health gains while keeping whole-person care central
- Protect dignity, privacy, and relational connection
- Advocate for fairness and access for all
- Support staff & residents through tech transitions
- Keep incarnational presence at the heart of ministry

Practical ministry

Barna Research 2024

12% comfortable with using AI to write sermons and 43% said they saw its merits in sermon preparation and research.

Raises ethical questions:

- "Why not, why can't, and why wouldn't the Holy Spirit work through AI?"
- What does it mean for preaching to be incarnational if the sermon isn't prayerfully crafted by the preacher themselves?
- How do we safeguard the integrity of the pulpit when words may be generated by algorithms trained on unknown sources?

"Is AI replacing something sacred in human life, or supporting it as a tool?"

Data, Privacy and Governance

Methodist churches are strongly advised not to enter any sensitive or personal information - such as names, contact details, or other confidential information - into AI tools or platforms. This caution is vital in light of both **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)** and **PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations)**, which impose strict obligations on how personal data is collected, stored and shared.



Questions for us

Are you using AI and if so, how?

What are the implications for us as a church?

How can AI aid our desire to be an inclusive, justice-seeking, evangelistic church?

Or will it hinder it?



Contact:

Fiona Fidgin

Digital Communications Officer

fidginf@methodistchurch.org.uk

07799 900 456

