

2026 Apologetics and Worldview Conference

Artificial Intelligence

Sponsored by the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews
Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato MN

Presentation I (June 24, 7pm): AI Explained – How does it work? What can it do and not do? What are its benefits and obvious dangers?

Rev. Jonathan Conner

Artificial intelligence is an increasingly diverse and influential part of modern life. Its capabilities are impressive, its potential enormous, and its challenges substantial. In “AI Explained: How does it work? What can it do and not do? What are its benefits and obvious dangers?”, Pastor Jonathan Conner explores the nature of AI (specifically the LLMs most people are encountering), its growing impact on society and the church, and some of the distinctive questions it raises for Christians. Rather than uncritically embracing AI or reflexively rejecting it, Pastor Conner urges hearers to bring Biblical wisdom to bear, a wisdom anchored in the fear of the Lord and a profound appreciation for what God has called good.

- I. Introduction: Why AI Matters
 - A. AI is already embedded throughout daily life.
 - B. Common reactions: excitement, fear, uncertainty.
 - C. Central question: *How should Christians think about AI?*
- II. What Is AI?
 - A. AI as the simulation of human intelligence.
 - B. AI as a powerful pattern-recognition tool trained on vast amounts of data.
- III. The "Box" Analogy
 - A. AI operates within a curated "box" of information.
 - B. AI recombines and predicts; it does not truly understand.
 - C. AI is not conscious, sentient, or genuinely agentic.
- IV. Humans and Wisdom Beyond the Box
 - A. Human beings possess consciousness, agency, and moral responsibility.
 - B. AI is a powerful tool; humans remain stewards.
 - C. Wisdom must come from outside the box—from God and His Word.
- V. A Biblical Framework: The Good of God
 - A. What has God called good?
 - B. Creation, order, embodiment, marriage, family, vocation, and worship.
 - C. Human flourishing in relationship to God, neighbor, and creation.
 - D. Guiding question: *Does AI support or undermine God's good?*

VI. AI is Not Neutral

- A. No tool is neutral.
- B. Tools shape culture, assumptions, and behavior.
- C. AI's potential benefits and dangers.
- D. The need for discernment regarding AI's influence.

VII. AI and Research

- A. AI as the ultimate "easy button."
- B. Benefits: efficiency and information gathering.
- C. Risks: reduced learning, critical thinking, and discernment.
- D. Problems of misinformation and propaganda.
- E. Wisdom requires competence before utilizing AI.

VIII. AI and Content Generation

- A. AI-generated writing, images, and media.
- B. Ethical concerns: integrity, plagiarism, and creativity.
- C. Appropriate uses as an assistant rather than a substitute.
- D. Applications in ministry, education, and communication.

IX. Navigating Competing Goods

- A. AI often presents trade-offs rather than simple answers.
- B. Evaluating specific situations individually.
- C. Returning continually to Scripture's definition of the good.

X. Conclusion: The Christian Calling

- A. Christians must use the framework of God's good to evaluate AI.
- B. The world needs Christian wisdom to speak into the question of AI.
- C. Churches, schools, and families need intentional reflection, conversation, and direction.