



**The United Methodist Church
Ohio East Area**

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Tracy. Malone
Resident Bishop

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Assistant to the Bishop

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Dear Pastors and Church Leaders,

For many decades, The United Methodist Church and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) have had a relationship through local churches chartering Scout troops. I have personally benefited from my involvement in Scouting ministries from early childhood through my teen years in Girl Scouts of America. The experience I had and the skills I developed played a significant role in developing me as a leader for the Church and in the world.

As you may be aware, the Boy Scouts of America has declared bankruptcy resulting from abuse allegations going back many decades. Because United Methodist churches are often the chartering organization for those Scout troops, our churches are at risk of being included in legal proceedings as abuse victims seek redress.

This is the time of year when local Scout troops recharter with their host United Methodist churches. Because the legal process is ongoing, and because the implications of entering a new charter are unknown, we have been advised by our Conference Chancellor, Rex Miller, and by counsel for the General United Methodist Church to direct all East Ohio United Methodist churches to do the following:

Do not initiate or renew any chartering agreements this fall.

Until we better know the implications of the Boy Scouts of America bankruptcy and the presentation of abuse claims, we recommend two options:

1. Tell the local Scout Council that you will *not* initiate or renew a chartering agreement but only extend the current agreement until December 31, 2021.
2. Tell the local Scout Council that you will *not* initiate or renew a chartering agreement but will enter into a Facilities Use Agreement (similar to agreements used with AA and other community groups) with their unit until December 31, 2021. This will act like a lease allowing the Scout unit to use church facilities, but the Scout unit will be responsible for everything else, including the selection of leaders.

Pastors and local church leadership are asked to work together to determine how best to communicate your intentions regarding charter agreements and facilities use agreements to both the Scout Council and your local church.

After December 31, 2021, we should be in a better position to see how the future will unfold. Once a BSA plan is approved by the bankruptcy court, we will know better how to proceed.

Lastly, please emphasize to local Scout leaders that this is not a rejection of Scouting. The United Methodist Church continues to be supportive of Scouting and of the positive impact it makes on the lives of young people. This action is merely a necessary adaptation to our relationship due to current circumstances.

Please direct questions to Rev. Ed Peterson, assistant to the Bishop, at epeterson@ecumc.com or 1 (800) 831-3972 ext. 111.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Tracy S. Malone