

## **The BSA and the UMC today**

Newsletter articles are supposed to be chocked full of information and very informative. There will be some of this here but let's start off with several obvious facts that the entire world knows. The United Methodist Church has been in turmoil for several years and our Church may not be the same before long. The General Conference, whenever that occurs will let us know.



Most of you also know the Boy Scouts of America have been under stress and changing as well. Just two years ago the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints decided to build their own scouting program thus making the United Methodist Church the leading faith community sponsor of Boy Scout programs. Soon the BSA introduced young women into the program. Girl Troops have grown exponentially. All looking good! But then the Well, back in the winter of 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit the entire world. Churches followed many businesses and shut down. It has been hard on us as a church and a conference. Peripheral damage has also hit. Bridge clubs, AAA, NA and Scouts all of a sudden had no place to meet. I cannot speak for these other external clubs but scouts have taken a huge hit. The church has strong guidelines that Bishop Lewis and the Cabinet have tediously worked out following Governor Northam's direction. This works, albeit painfully, for the church. Scouts are young. They are energetic. They are active. We are at the end of the annual rechartering effort for the BSA. We should know before long the hit to membership. I know my home Cub Scout pack has lost about 40% of its membership.

Still, Conference-wide and nationally we are working to stabilize and boldly move forward. We are looking to aggressively add BigBrothersBigSisters more into our programs support. Bigs (as they are affectionally known) are a supportive agency with us. We want to turn to churches that do not have youth or the resources to run scouting programs and offer this 1:1 program to our members.

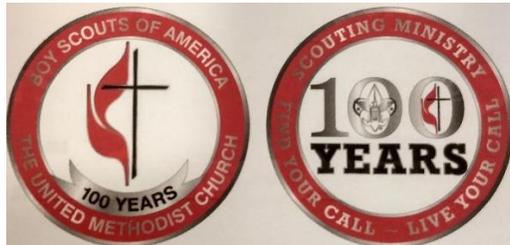
We have worked closely with Bishop Lewis and select members of the Cabinet to protect our churches and leaders from the problems with the Boy Scout bankruptcy and inherent issues our local churches may encounter with the sex-abuse issues. I must tell the members of the Virginia Conference that we, in Scouting Ministry, are working to ensure that no child is abused at all. The BSA Youth Protection program started in the mid-1980s and has improved many times. An adult cannot be a registered leader until they successfully pass this training. It is also renewable every two years.

At the national level we are building a new, stronger more focused training program that will be delivered in several forms. First will be our annual United Methodist Scouter Workshop at Philmont July 11-17.



We will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UMC and BSA then as well. We will be inviting scout leaders and leaders in the church to come out to New Mexico and learn more and more. We will have some scholarships also available.

We have developed a beautiful Challenge Coin for our anniversary fund raiser. We would be honored if you would support our Scouting Ministry with a donation. The quantities are limited. Go to <http://bit.ly/100yrCelebrate> to order. Aren't they beautiful? I carry one in my pocket!



Now you can see why we led off with an image of Gumby and some Latin! We have been working hard to maintain, to repair and to grow no matter what is in front of us. Oh...Semper Gumby! Forever Flexible!

Blessing to all and may 2021 be a great year!

Bill Chaffin

VA UMC Conference Ministry of Scouting Coordinator

[bcumcbsa@juno.com](mailto:bcumcbsa@juno.com) 804-356-6075

January 2021