The Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia
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Church Relationships with Scouting America

In response to several questions regarding churches serving as Scouting America (formerly: Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Chartered Organizations or providing space for scouting activities, diocesan Chancellor Anne Bibeau and Canon to the Ordinary Carla McCook have consulted with legal counsel for The Episcopal Church and other diocese regarding such agreements. As you consider your relationship with the Scouts, these factors should be taken into consideration:

- Our bishop continues to express support for Scouting America as an organization and for our churches to be affiliated with or provide space to scouting troops.

- If a church determines itself to be a Scouting America Chartered Organization, it should be understood that their affiliation with Scouting America is a part of their local mission, i.e. more than an agreement for use of space. There should be a conversation between the clergy and church wardens and local Scouting America leaders to ensure that all parties have a common understanding of the Chartered Organization agreement and the responsibilities of the church and Scouting America. The vestry should hold a vote to accept or reject the Chartered Organization agreement. A sample agreement provided by a local Scouting America Council is available here.

- Any Chartered Organization agreement should include insurance and indemnification provided by Scouting America and a statement of the responsibilities of the Chartered Organization. The church should consult with the Church Insurance Company (or other insurance provider) to make sure the church's own policy covers the Chartered Organization agreement.

- If the church is simply providing space to the scouting troop and does not plan to exercise any further oversight or involvement, a space-use agreement is more appropriate. Such an agreement should include insurance and indemnification provided by Scouting America. The church should contact the Church Insurance Company (or other insurance provider) to make sure the church's own policy covers the space-use agreement.

- Scouting America provides Youth Protection Training to all unit leaders. Our diocesan Safe Church guidelines note that it is *required* that leaders of regular guest organizations must complete certain modules of Safeguarding Online and participate in the local conversations that are part of the annual Safe Church Audit. Any clergy, church staff or church volunteers engaging with a scouting troop must complete Safeguarding training regardless of whether they have completed Scouting America Youth Protection Training. We require that Scout leaders and participants of all regular guest organizations be engaged in the annual Safe Church Audit. If the church is a Scouting America Chartered Organization, a review of the Scouting America relationship is to be included in the annual Safe Church Audit.

Please contact Canon Carla McCook (cmccook@diosova.org or 757-213-3390) with any questions.

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