

Recent History of Glenn & Glenn Scouts

For nearly a century, Glenn Memorial UMC has been a “charter partner” for a local group or groups of Boys Scouts of America (our “Glenn Scouts”). Glenn UMC has provided space for the Scouts to conduct their meetings and enjoy numerous activities. Glenn UMC has provided the Scouts with transportation through the use of our buses. Glenn UMC has provided the Scouts with support through a variety of celebrations of all that is scouting. And, to one degree or another and in a myriad of ways, Glenn UMC has provided the Scouts with our financial support. All of this we have gladly done under the terms of an agreement between the Boy Scouts of America (the “BSA”), the BSA’s Atlanta Area Council, and Glenn UMC, known as a “Charter Agreement.”

In early 2020, following numerous lawsuits against the Boy Scouts of America (“BSA”) regarding allegations of bad conduct by some scout leaders over several decades, and facing an untold amount of financial responsibility for that bad conduct, the BSA filed for bankruptcy to shield itself from any further financial responsibilities arising out of that conduct.

In late 2020, as an entity affiliated with the BSA that potentially could have faced exposure to liability relating to the BSA conduct, Glenn UMC filed a ‘proof of claim’ in the BSA’s bankruptcy proceeding in order to protect the interests of Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church. However, Glenn UMC voluntarily entered into another Charter Agreement for 2021 and continued providing all of the same amount of support for our Glenn Scouts.

On August 16, 2021, our Bishop reported that “representatives of The United Methodist Church are reviewing the charter agreement program” and asked that churches “not extend their current charter agreements with the BSA beyond December 31, 2021.”

Shortly thereafter, in the fall of 2021, Glenn received updated instructions and permission to renew our charter agreement for 2022. Glenn agreed to renew the charter agreement with our local Scouts for 2022. In December of 2021, the Glenn Troop representative wrote to Glenn, “Please relay our gratitude to the Trustees for their support during this tenuous time between the UMC and the BSA and for their ongoing commitment to scouting.”

Six months later, in June of 2022, our Bishop reported that a new form of agreement for Scouts and UMC partners was being crafted and that those agreements would be ready later that month.

On June 20, 2022, UMC-Scouts announced the release of a new “Affiliation Agreement.” They reported that after months of negotiations, the new Affiliation Agreement had been developed and approved by the BSA, the UMC Leadership Committee and others. The UMC-Scouts further reported that “The new Affiliation Agreement will become available for United Methodist packs and troops to sign on July 1st. Local BSA councils will reach out to their United Methodist units over the coming months in groups to sign the new agreement.”

On August 14, 2022, the Glenn Troop indicated that they preferred the traditional Charter Agreement and that the new Affiliation Agreement was their second choice.

On September 13, 2022, the Glenn Troop Liaison and the BSA’s Atlanta Area Council (“the Atlanta Area Council”) emailed to Glenn the form Charter Agreement and the new form Affiliation Agreement that were “just approved last week.”

That same night, September 13, 2022, at the Glenn Board of Trustees meeting, the Atlanta Area Council representative indicated for the first time that the Atlanta Area Council had not approved the affiliation agreement. Because the Charter Agreement would expose Glenn UMC to potential liability and would impose strenuous supervisory and administrative responsibilities on the church, following an in depth discussion about Glenn’s unaltered desire to continue supporting our Glenn Scouts while also looking out for the best interests of Glenn Memorial UMC, the Glenn Trustees voted to enter into an Affiliation Agreement for 2023. Later that fall, the Atlanta Area Council officially said they were not prepared to enter into an affiliation agreement for 2023.

On December 2, 2022, despite the notable pitfalls of the charter agreement, the Glenn Trustees notified the Glenn Troop and the Atlanta Area Council that Glenn would sign “the charter agreement, **for 2023 only**, but with ... the understanding that in 2023 the Atlanta Area Council will prepare to enter into an affiliation agreement for 2024. Glenn also made minor revisions to the charter agreement affecting only the BSA’s responsibilities, not the Atlanta Area Council’s responsibilities.

The following day, the Atlanta Area Council sent an email stating that its “timeline for accepting the affiliation agreement could be next year (2024) at the earliest. **This would allow for us to set up the infrastructure needed to accommodate the affiliation agreement.**”

Then, on December 4, 2022, the Atlanta Area Council rejected Glenn’s revisions to the charter agreement.

On December 6, 2022, the Glenn Trustees recommended to the Glenn Church Council “**that we enter into the form charter agreement and communicate to the Troop/Pack and the Atlanta Area Council that this will be our last charter [agreement] and expect an affiliation agreement for 2024.** Otherwise, the Troop/Pack will need to plan for a facilities use agreement/rechartering (not our first choice but the only remaining option).”

The next day, December 7, 2022, Rebecca Shanlever, the Glenn representative to the Glenn Scouts, emailed the Troop’s lead representative to report the Trustees’ recommendation and stated: “**I expect this will be the last charter,** ... so after the new year we should start working to make sure the AAC [the Atlanta Area Council] is ready for the affiliation agreement for 2024.”

In the fall of 2023, when the Glenn Scouts approached the Glenn Trustees regarding the agreement to be entered into for 2024, the Trustees reminded the Glenn Scouts’ representative that Glenn UMC had made it clear in the first week of December 2022:

- (i) that 2023 was the final year that Glenn would operate under a Charter Agreement;
- (ii) that Glenn UMC desired to continue supporting the Glenn Scouts by entering into an Affiliation Agreement that had already been approved by the Boy Scouts of America and the UMC Leadership Committee;
- (iii) that the Atlanta Area Council needed to adopt the Affiliation Agreement that had previously been approved by everyone else concerned; and,
- (iv) that if the Atlanta Area Council was not going to agree to enter into an Affiliation Agreement, then the Glenn Scouts would need to plan for operating under a “facilities use agreement” with Glenn UMC where they could continue using Glenn facilities **but they would need to charter with some other entity willing to take on the financial, liability and personnel**

commitments that a charter agreement would require and which Glenn UMC simply cannot continue undertaking while serving the best interests of Glenn UMC and its members and missions.

As you can see from the above, Glenn UMC has continued steadfastly with its commitment to the Glenn Scouts. We have repeatedly operated under the dictates of the BSA and the Atlanta Area Council and we repeatedly signed onto their preferred Charter Agreement. But, we made it unequivocally clear as early as December 2, 2022, that Glenn **would not** enter into another charter agreement after 2023. And, we have never wavered from that position.

Since being informed of Glenn UMC's decision in late 2022, it is unknown whether the Atlanta Area Council has done anything to "set up the infrastructure needed to accommodate the affiliation agreement" for use in 2024 or whether it has informed anyone what it would need in order for it to approve the Affiliation Agreement that the Boy Scouts of America agreed to in June of 2022, some 18 months ago.

In this final month of our final charter agreement period (2023), Glenn Memorial UMC continues to stand ready to enter into the Affiliation Agreement that the Boy Scouts of America helped develop and endorses. In the alternative, we have already informed the Glenn Scouts representatives and the Atlanta Area Council that we will gladly enter into a Facilities Use Agreement that will meet the needs of the Glenn Scouts if they can secure a new chartering partner. We remain hopeful that the Atlanta Area Council will fulfill its obligations to our Glenn Scouts so that Glenn UMC and our Glenn Scouts can continue our long and rich relationship.