

December 2024 Edition

# ABS Today

A Publication of the Association of Baptists for Scouting



Proverbs 23:23  
NKJV

"Buy the truth,  
and do not sell it,  
Also wisdom and  
instruction and  
understanding."



## Seeking the sweet nectar of knowledge

### ABS National Training is a Success

The week of July 7-13 last summer was a busy and productive time for many Association of Baptists Scouters as they came together at the Philmont Training Center for "Baptists in Scouting – Reaching, Teaching, and Ministering to Families" conference. Over a span of five days a wide array of topics were discussed to assist these committed Scouters in expanding, understanding, and improving ways to reach more Scouts and Scouters with the very best Scouting has to offer.

It's been said that every youth

and every unit deserves a trained Scouter to guide, mentor and oversee a safe, fun filled and productive program. Scouting emphasizes Duty to God. The ABS conference at the Philmont Training Center provided ideas and tools to support these lofty goals for Baptist sponsored units.

Daily sessions and breakouts focused on the various programs and resources available to Baptists in Scouting. These ranged from finances, recruiting, to outreach ministries. Many new ideas were shared and

discussed and some great ideas for enhancing local programs were shared by the Baptists Scouters from across the nation. Popular topics like "How do we balance teaching life skills, citizenship, leadership, etc. and our faith?", "How can I use my Scouting ministry to fulfill the Great Commission?", "How Baptist can I make my Scouting ministry?", and "How do I recruit and train great leaders?" are issues we all encounter and the discussions of fresh ideas provided many with new plans for their return home.

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Association of Baptists for Scouting (ABS) Newsletter - a communication intended to help you remain current on activities of the ABS. Please share with other Scouters and consider supporting these efforts with your time, talents and treasure. It is only through the dedication of Baptist Scouters like you that ABS can expand efforts throughout this great land. More than ever our world needs the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our young people in Scouting deserve it.



## President's Message

*By John Lyon*

December 1st has just passed, and we seem to be hurtling faster and faster to Christmas and New Year and busyness and details . .

Then I stop - take a breath - and the amazing plans that have just happened over the past few months fly into my mind. From our wonderful Baptist conference at Philmont Training Center we saw many things we wanted to do. During a worshipful time together Thomas and Tim guided us to create our visions and help create our multi-year plan impacting families for Christ.

In other stories herein you will see some of those plans taking shape - make sure you read the article on the 2026 Scouting America National Jamboree. Our 2023 NJ booth was very successful, combining youth and adult staff. Our goal is to further reach youth for Christ with more youth staff than before. Perhaps you want to join the 2026NJ ABS team!

Following another item discussed during the PTC conference, the Executive Board approved the plan for a Baptist seminary student to serve as a full time Philmont Chaplain for the 2025 season. Thanks to Chip Turner's leadership as Philmont Chaplaincy Coordinator, we have learned the importance of chaplains available throughout the Philmont experience. We have confidence that through these committed, faithful servants of Christ that many needs will be met and lives will be eternally changed. We cannot know, this side of heaven, the impacts of these services.

One of the great things about gathering together through learning, worshiping and planning is realizing the great potential of ABS members being face to face. For the first time in recent memory we will gather at Pineville First Baptist Church in Pineville, Louisiana on February 20-23, 2025. Stay tuned for more details, members are welcome.

I'm feeling excited as we prepare to celebrate Our Savior's Birth and continue to share the Good News with Scouts and families.  
Blessings

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### 2024 ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR SCOUTING COMMITTEE

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Secretary: Eric Hood  
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Newsletter: Dale Copeland  
Member at Large (1): Pam Thompson  
Member at Large (2): Ted Spangenberg  
Member at Large (3): Jerry Wells  
Endowment (1): Verne Wright  
Endowment (2): Patrick Liang  
Endowment (3): R. Chip Turner

## ABS National Training (from page 1)

Of course, no get together would be complete without time for fellowship and great food and this was no exception. Breaks, mealtimes, and evenings found these Scouters visiting together and catching up on happenings since their last time together. It was no surprise that this was accompanied by “chasing rabbits” as they explored the day’s presentations to better understand and expand on these concepts from their experiences back home.

One afternoon “off” allowed trips to backcountry camps to see the programs, visit the chapels, and get to know backcountry staff members. Cimarroncito and Ponil were explored and enjoyed. The Philmont Chaplaincy team supported these visits with transportation, a knowledge of the backcountry and as a guide service around camps. Impromptu songfests accompanied devotional time and great fellowship. It was no surprise that the unanimous opinion was that the conference was a success. Even greater things are planned for the future.

It has been said,

If not us, then who?  
If not now, then when?  
- John Lewis

Baptists must be devoted to training and equipping the next generation of leaders.



It's been said that every youth and every unit deserves a trained Scouter to guide, mentor and oversee a safe, fun filled and productive program. Scouting emphasizes Duty to God. This conference will provide ideas and tools to support these lofty goals for Baptist sponsored units.





# Jamboree 2026 Plans - Youth Staff

*By Jerry Wells, 2026 Jambo ABS Coordinator*

The 2026 National Jamboree will be here soon and the ABS is already planning for another successful opportunity to share our faith with Scouts from across the nation in the Faith & Beliefs program area. In 2023 there were several Scout youth serving in the booth and it was a BIG hit as they connected with thousands of young people and many adults. It is not surprising that young people connect and relate best with others their age. And it is an amazing opportunity for Baptist youth staff to engage with others about faith issues while polishing their own leadership skills.

There will be planned days off for all staff to provide time for everyone to visit the myriad booths and program areas spread across the Summit Jamboree site. Staff are encouraged to engage and share their faith, all while experiencing what many consider a once in a lifetime event at a National Jamboree.

Jamboree dates for ABS staff are July 19-31, 2026, (plus travel time, both to and from) at the Summit Bechtel Reserve near Beckley, West Virginia. This area was created specifically for Scouting and has some amazing program areas, like the Big Zip, BMX track, and an amazing climbing wall. No one lacks for things to do at a Jamboree!

The ABS committee would like to have more youth serve in our booth in 2026. To enable that goal the ABS recently approved full youth scholarships to cover ABS youth staff's Jambo fee, so they would just need to outfit themselves and get to the Summit Bechtel Reserve. A partial scholarship of fees is also available for adult ABS staff. If you would like to attend and serve with other Baptists at the 2026 National Jamboree or need more information, please contact the ABS Jamboree leader, Jerry Wells, at [Jerry.Wells@me.com](mailto:Jerry.Wells@me.com)

*Don't delay, do it today!*





## ABS Eagle Scout Corner

### Eagle Scout's Mountaintop Memories

Along the trail to Eagle every Scout will make decisions, learn new skills and gain new friends, as well as making memories that last a lifetime. It might be their first campout with a leaky tent or a canoe trip when everything was dumped overboard or the 'overcooked' meal no one would eat – all the challenges met and overcome – for that is what Scouting is about. With each experience comes knowledge, and with knowledge comes skills that ultimately grows confidence. All this is a part of the Scouting trail, the trail to Scouting's ultimate goal of earning the Eagle badge.

For many Scouts (and Scouters) their memories from a trek at Philmont may stand out, truly, as a mountaintop experience. It is there that challenges are met and overcome, where every day and every trail presents new opportunities. For many this includes real mountains to conquer and stand atop the world, even if only for a time.



Eagle Scout James Hamlin with his dad atop Mount Baldy

We read in Luke 9:28

*"Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray."*

Mountains can help us become more aware of the awesome magnitude of our mighty God.

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## Chapel Refurbishment Projects Now Part of the Philmont Annual Calendar

Thanks to the hard work of a number of volunteers over the past few years, the Chapel Refurbishment Week has become part of the annual calendar at Philmont Scout Ranch. The largest representation each year has come from the Association of Baptists for Scouting team led by Donna Copeland. In 2024, work was done at every backcountry and headquarters chapel with the exception of Black Mountain and Sawmill which were unreachable because of accumulated snow from the winter. In addition, a new chapel site was established adjacent to the Baldy Town Cemetery.

May 7-11 are the dates for the 2025 event and the assignment is even more aggressive than last year. Work is scheduled for every current chapel with two additional locations in the planning. Those interested in knowing more or ready to volunteer for 2025 are encouraged to contact Donna Copeland [DonnaJCopeland@protonmail.com](mailto:DonnaJCopeland@protonmail.com) who will again coordinate the ABS team. The size of the entire group is limited by accommodation and logistical considerations, so act now if you are interested.

## BSA Brand Changes

As most Scouters are aware, the last several years have seen numerous changes for the Boy Scouts of America. These changes range from the residual impacts of the Covid pandemic, to an enhanced, positive focus on youth safety, to finances and staffing reductions resulting from the extended and difficult process of the National BSA bankruptcy.

As the movement proceeds to move into the future there is another change to be aware of in months to come. All BSA programs now offer all youth, both girls and boys, an opportunity to participate, learn and grow. The existing brand - Boy Scouts of America - does not fully describe this reality and some might not understand all that is available for their children. After much discussion the national board elected to move forward with an updated branding for the Scouting movement.

A new brand identity will roll out in coming months when Scouting America becomes the new brand identity of all Scouting programs. The Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts and Exploring programs all remain, but now under the umbrella brand of Scouting America. The legal/business identity of the organization remains Boy Scouts of America. It is believed that this branding update improves awareness of all that Scouting offers today for all youth. It is felt that eliminating the word "Boy" and restating the remaining "Scouts of America" simply as "Scouting America" will better and more precisely communicate the full scope of Scouting today.

This change has already begun and becomes official in February 2025. You will see the new logo soon if you haven't already.

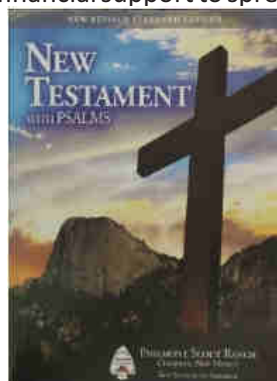
**Scouting America.**

Try to leave this world a little better than you found it and, when your turn comes to die, you can die happy in feeling that at any rate you have not wasted your time, but have done your best.

--Robert Baden-Powell

## New Testaments

All High Adventure bases (Philmont, Summit, Sea Base and Northern Tier) are supplied New Testaments w/Psalms for all their program participants attending chapel services. These are made possible by generous donations from religious groups, local churches and individuals who desire that each Scout and Scouter have their own copy of a New Testament. This project continued in 2024 with several Baptists groups and churches participating through funding gifts. Thousands of these backpack sized books are handed out during chapel services each summer. We encourage more church's participation and financial support to spread the Gospel.



### Important Dates

February 21-23, 2025  
ABS Conference @  
Pineville First Baptist Church

May 7-11, 2025  
Refurb Chapels @ Philmont

May 12-16, 2025  
National Annual Meeting  
Orlando, Florida

Contact Us:

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