

## Lutheran Church's and BSA Chaplaincy

Have you ever thought about to serving as a Lutheran Chaplain? The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Manual on Chaplains and Chaplain Aids tells us how: *"To serve as a chaplain or chaplain aide is a unique opportunity for ministry. While serving in these offices, you will have the opportunity to help Scouts as they grow, both physically and spiritually. Some techniques to be used are modeling, mentoring, and offering faith-based experiences."*

- Are you willing to learn and teach the value/difference Chaplains can make?

The National Lutheran Association on Scouting (NLAS) works in consultation with Lutheran adjudicatory officials (the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), and other Lutheran Church bodies: to identify and maintain a roster of recommended Lutheran Chaplains to serve: 1) national BSA events (e.g. *National Jamboree, BSA hosted World Jamboree, or National Order of the Arrow Conference*), 2) established BSA high adventure bases, and 3) other program activities as approved by the NLAS Executive Board.

All applicants desiring to be rostered as *"recommended Lutheran Chaplains"* must be either:

- a. A rostered member of a national Lutheran Church body (*Word and Sacrament or Deacon/DCE*) To include those with experience in Parish, Synodical, Active/Retired Military, Police, Fire, Hospital, Campus, Educational and related callings
  - b. A recommended seminarian who has completed at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education
- There are NO gender restrictions
  - Licensed counselors or therapists are wanted
  - Scouting background or familiarity with history – a plus
    - Serve as part of an interfaith chaplaincy team
    - Minister to a "congregation" of as many as 2,000 participants
    - Options for predominantly youth or adult co-ed focus are possible
    - Walking 1-5 miles per day and living in a tent with a cot for ~ 2 weeks is the norm
    - Ambient temperature showers likely without your own solar shower bag
  - Assist scouts and scouters during their Jamboree journey's

To get a fuller idea of what National/ World Jamboree Chaplaincy is like, please watch the following video reflection from Chaplain Tom Strack <https://photos.app.goo.gl/VuQrU29BcDDAxQKB8>

## General Chaplain Event Duties

- a. Support the event Chief Chaplain(s) and Chaplain Leadership as requested.
- b. Attend daily meetings Chaplaincy Headquarters or Basecamp Headquarters as appropriate.
- c. Assist in the preparation of religious support material.
- d. Provide daily chaplaincy services as needed for assigned units.
- e. Distribute religious support material.
- f. Assist Event Management in case of serious accident, illness, or death.
- g. Visit event participants in **on-site** medical facilities in coordination with Chaplaincy leadership.  
(*Note: Special chaplaincy teams are responsible for all off-site hospital visitations*)
- h. Promote and conduct religious worship services and activities.
- i. Encourage Scouts to be involved in any Duty to God program/activity conducted back home.

- j. Ensure chaplains are available/on-call in accordance with Chaplain Leadership and event rules.
- k. Encourage Scouts to participate in any “Duty to God”/“Faith and Belief” Zone activities.
- l. Advocate Scout and Scouter participation in their tradition’s religious award program
- m. Encourage and assist Chaplain Aides (*as applicable*) to carry out this youth leadership position

### **Chaplaincy Functions**

- c. Headquarters Chaplain Team: Under the direction of the event’s Chief Chaplain(s), coordinate specific duties with all chaplains, provide overall chaplaincy management, and provide a direct conduit between the Jamboree Headquarters and event chaplain staff. Oversee hospital liaison, serve as Night Duty Chaplains to provide for immediate action/response for emergency/emergent overnight events, and manage other specific program areas and/or sites as needed. Facilitate connection between participants-in-need and representatives of their religious tradition as required. Holds daily briefing for staff and Basecamp Chaplains (*as applicable*) to coordinate activities and communications with field elements. When involved in smaller BSA events, support the event’s Chief Chaplain in providing for the pastoral and spiritual needs of all participants and staff members as required.
- d. Basecamp Chaplain Team (For larger BSA events): Coordinates between the Chaplain Headquarters staff and the event Basecamp staff. Oversees the pastoral and spiritual needs of the Basecamp staff and assists the Basecamp’s Operations staff. They are part of the basecamp staff and report to the basecamp director. They support the basecamp director and assist, substitute, coordinate, and inform subcamp chaplains as needed. They may assist headquarters chaplains in hospital and other duties as required. They participate in daily Chaplain Headquarters briefings.
- e. Subcamp Chaplain Team (For larger BSA events): Directly contribute to the overall spiritual climate of the assigned subcamp and lead by-example in exemplifying BSA’s Duty to God. Serve as a member of the subcamp staff and report directly to the subcamp director. Represent your specific faith community while serving participants in both an ecumenical and interfaith environment. Administer to all participants in need, or in crisis, in conjunction with appropriate Medical and Listening Ear staff. Work with the Health and Safety Services Staff in event of serious accidents, illnesses, emergency’s, or deaths. Notify Chaplain Headquarters when any participant is hospitalized. Ensure one chaplain is always available and on-call in the Subcamp. Provide friendly, and sincere welcomes to Scouts, leaders, and visitors for an approximately 3,000 person interfaith “*congregation.*” Schedule, arrange, and officiate at any formal subcamp associated worship services. Encourage and assist Chaplain Aides (*as applicable*) to successfully fulfill this youth designated leadership position. Work with Medical and Listening Ear staffs. Other duties as assigned while undergoing camp-wide emergencies.
- f. Medical/Listening Ear – Chaplaincy Integration:
  - i. All Lutheran BSA Chaplains are to interface with medical and Listening Ear event teams to ensure participants are cared for medically, emotionally, and spiritually.
  - ii. Chaplains will augment participant care using their unique position to provide additional insight(s) into their mental/emotional health and wellness.
  - iii. Listening Ear (LE) team members will serve as ombudsman for various issues participants have during BSA events. LE teams are designed to answer participant questions and provide directions to include how to obtain medical, emotional, or spiritual assistance. LE teams will provide respond to these everyday needs while also providing personal escort for participants who require any kind of medical, mental health, or spiritual care.

## Lutheran Chaplaincy Validation Process

### g. Initial Steps:

- i. Contact nearest BSA Council or District Office to register as a BSA Leader in either a unit, district, or council position unless already registered. All Chaplains are required to have an active BSA registration upon arrival for BSA event service.
- ii. Prepare and submit a brief biography of your ministry and scouting experiences (*to include the name, number, and email address for your current Bishop/District President and Seminary Dean (if seminarian)*) to the NLAS Lead Chaplain/Chaplaincy Committee to facilitate denominational review and to ensure youth protection suitability (*see contact information below*).
- iii. Complete the BSA on-line application process for event staff Chaplains.

### h. Subsequent Steps:

- i. Complete the BSA registration and fee processes while notifying the NLAS Lead Chaplain/Chaplain Committee of any problems/issues (*see contact information below*).
- ii. The Led Chaplain/Chaplaincy Committee will notify each candidate upon completion of your denomination's critical suitability examination and inclusion in the Roster of recommended Lutheran Chaplains.
- iii. Everyone rostered as "***recommended Lutheran Chaplains***" are eligible to serve on the NLAS Chaplaincy Committee. Chaplaincy Committee members shall be approved by a national Lutheran Church body to perform public service on behalf of the Church.
- iv. Prior to **the completion** of each National Jamboree, the Lead Chaplain/Chaplaincy Committee will provide a stipend to rostered Lutheran Chaplains to partially cover registration fees based upon the total number of serving Lutheran event Chaplains, actual NLAS Chaplaincy fund reserves, and the total number of Lutheran seminarians/first-call pastors serving.

## Need More Information?

For further questions or additional information on how to become a National/World Lutheran BSA Chaplain, please contact the NLAS Lead Chaplain/Chaplain Committee via: [chaplain@nlas.org](mailto:chaplain@nlas.org)

For information regarding an upcoming jamboree please follow this link: <https://jamboree.scouting.org/>