

## **“It’s Time”**

### **Kicking off the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Florida Georgia District**

**God has blessed us with many opportunities and blessings to unite as a District and celebrate together.**

**Theme:** “Chosen with Purpose – Abiding in Jesus”

**Kickoff** – during the Pentecost season or possibly Pentecost Sunday.

**Visuals** – videos will become available in the near future celebrating the work of the District.

**Stewardship sermon series**- to be provided at convention to be used during the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year – **“Life ... It is More than a Game” Moving from Board Games to a Life that is Anything but Boring**” (a tool that you can use if you so choose.)

**Possible sermon starters and a Children’s sermon that could be used.**

**Sermon Starters for – Pentecost Sunday/ kickoff for 70 Anniversary of the Florida – Georgia District.**

#### **Chosen to Serve**

How do you feel if someone comes up to you and say, “You’ve been chosen...” – chosen to represent the school, represent the company, or the country... We feel good. It is an honor to be chosen. Yet the truth is we are all chosen – chosen by Jesus to represent Him while on earth.

The Lord says His disciples in John 15:16 “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last.”

We are chosen for a purpose. If you see your life that way, everything changes. We cannot find this purpose by looking at ourselves, or derive it from this world. It all begins with **Jesus Christ**. We are made to worship God. We are created to become like Jesus. We are shaped for serving Him.

We are made for a mission - to connect people to Christ – we do that as an individual and as a congregation but also as a District and a Synod. Today we celebrate with our brother and sisters in the Florida Georgia District the past 70 years and the bright future that is before us with Jesus leading us. Let's be disciples of Jesus Christ and together we join to make more disciples for Christ.

### **Empowered by the Spirit – could be used Pentecost Sunday**

The chairman reported that the church roll now stood at 120 members. They had not been able to obtain a building, so they were still meeting in a second-floor room that they had been able to rent in the city. There had been a lot of discussion about how they should fill a leadership position that had become vacant, but besides that, not a lot had been happening.

The task of reaching their community seemed to be beyond them. There was very little money, very few people, a lot of fear, and outside of their meeting place, a culture that had very little room for their message. Not much has changed! But that is pretty much how it was in the only church in existence at the beginning of the book of Acts. When Christ ascended to heaven, there were only about 120 believers in Jerusalem (Acts 1:15). They believed that Christ died for their sins and rose again, but they had focused essentially on themselves and their own internal organization. In many ways we often do the same.

But Christ had spoken about an event that would change all that. In a few days, He had said, they would be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). Then, He said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (v. 8)

They did not have to wait long. Just ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven and fifty days after the resurrection, there was a festival called Pentecost. It was a celebration of the beginning of harvest and of the occasion when God came down to Mount Sinai and gave the Law to Moses. Jerusalem was crammed with visitors from many countries. Luke tells us that people had come "from every nation under heaven." (2:5)

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the first Christian believers. After that, things were never the same. Today we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the work that is being done in the Florida- Georgia District as we celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> year of serving Jesus. Yes we have been "Chosen with Purpose –Abiding in Jesus.

## **The Command of Jesus**

John 15:12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

That's easy isn't it ... or is it? Who is this command for ... His disciples 2000 years ago? Yes – but it is also for his disciples now? Who are these ... US, HIS church

**Timeless Truth:** Nobody has ever left a church because they were loved too much ... it is usually because they have been judged or not accepted.

Mother Theresa once said 'if you spend all your time judging people, there is no time left to love them'. It's a command for us the Church ... all of us!!! Now!!! To Love – because we have been Chosen with Purpose – today the Holy Spirit ignites us with the ministry of connecting people to Jesus. On the day of Pentecost we celebrated the birth of the church but during this season we join with one another in the Florida Georgia District as we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of this amazing ministry. May our love abound.

Don't waste your time trying to figure out each other's salvation ... concentrate on your own walk with God and leave the conviction and judgement up to Him! His command is simple ... 'love one another' ...

## **Jesus Love You – John 15:13**

JESUS LOVES YOU!!!!!! – You know how I know – the Bible Tells Me So --- But how much does he love us? ... '13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

He is telling us about what's to come ... because He would lay down His life for His friends ... who are His friends???? (WE ARE)

Together we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Florida – Georgia District – may it be a year of new ministries and most of all a year of loving one another?

## **Pentecost Celebration**

Someone has said - "The Average Christian And The Average Church are Somewhere Bogged Down Between Calvary and Pentecost. They have been to Calvary for Pardon, but they Have Not Been to Pentecost For Power. Bethlehem means God With Us. Calvary means God For Us. But Pentecost means God In Us.

AS we celebrate ministry today we celebrate that we have been Chosen with Purpose – Abiding with Jesus. The theme of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Florida Georgia District.

### **Chosen with Purpose (celebrating diversity in ministry)**

Pentecost was God's announcement to the human race that heaven's good news was for the whole human race. It didn't matter what your tongue, your dialect, your accent, your grammatical knowledge; didn't matter if you were a Jew, a Gentile, a Roman or a Greek, or whether you were educated or illiterate; you could hear and *understand* God's good news in your own vernacular.

Which is to say that for the first time the greatest barrier to a worldwide faith had been torn down. Today we celebrate that gift in the ministries of the Florida- Georgia District as we give God praise for the diversities of ministry within our District as we celebrate 70 years of connecting people to Jesus.

### **Chosen with Purpose (option 2)**

Will Willimon wrote, "The Church is like a football huddle. You know that something important is being said there, but you can't understand a word of it, and all you can see is their rear ends." Someone else said the Church needs to speak some language other than Christianese.

What a wonderful thought as we celebrate Pentecost and the ministries of our churches and schools in the Florida-Georgia District on it's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Let's let the theme **Chosen with Purpose – Abiding in Jesus** – take our ministries to the world that surrounds us.

## **The Commission of Jesus**

Jesus reminds us that our life is a journey ... He says 'Now remain in my love'. WE get the chance to remain with ... to abide with Him! Or we can walk away.

If we remain in Him we can do so much good ... if we try and do things in our own strength we cannot. He also says he chose us and appointed us to go and bear fruit. Notice ... He says that we must GO!

It's not about standing still, we can't bear fruit when we hide away from everyone in our little church ... when our only God time is in these walls.

Our whole lives are a witness to Him and if we are truly remaining in Him and trusting in Him and calling upon Him to be our strength and rock then we will bear fruit. People will come and fulfil the great commission ... to make disciples for Him. That's what the day of Pentecost is all about and that is what our mission in ministry is all about as part of the Florida-Georgia District as we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> year of ministry as a District.

### **Where are you going?**

I remember when I was a kid. My mom would ask me where I was going. When I got older I was still asked where I was going. What is strange is that it still happens today. **"Where are you going?"**

Today – that question could be rephrased – **Where is the church going?** Are we a church on fire? What is the Lord asking us to do? As we combine Pentecost with our District's theme of "Chosen with Purpose – Abiding in Jesus" and as we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary or birth of our district it becomes clear what the Lord wants of His church. **He wants His church to manifest fruit.** During this celebration year let's explore new ways we can bear fruit. John 15:16-17

### **Opening for Pentecost Sunday**

(could be used as a welcome prior to the service to set the theme of the day.)

"When God sends forth the Spirit, amazing things happen: barriers are broken . . . communities are formed . . . opposites are reconciled . . . unity is established . . . disease is cured . . . addiction is broken . . . cities are renewed . . . races are reconciled . . . hope is established . . . people are blessed . . . and church happens.

"Today the Spirit of God is present and we're gonna have church. So be ready . . . get ready . . . God is up to something . . . discouraged folks cheer up . . . dishonest folks 'fess up . . . sour folks sweeten up . . . closed

folk . . . open up . . . gossipers shut up . . . conflicted folks make up . . .  
sleeping folks wake up . . . lukewarm folk . . . fire up . . . dry bones shake  
up . . . and pew potatoes stand up!

“But most of all . . . Christ the Savior of all the world is lifted up. Because we  
have been **“Chosen with a Purpose – Abiding in Jesus”** What a beautiful  
Sunday to kick off our Florida- Georgia’s 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## **Children’s sermon**

### **Who Am I?**

Have you ever played the game “Who Am I”? I will give you clues and you  
have to guess who I am describing. Are you ready?

- I am so big that I cover most of two states
- If you were to drive from the southernmost point of me to my farthest  
northern point it would be a distance of more than 1500 miles
- I am divided into 5 regions
- I have 202 outposts or meeting places
- I have 53,786 workers
- I also have 37 preschools, 31 Elementary Schools and 1 High School

It’s the Florida- Georgia District and how appropriate that on Pentecost  
Sunday – the birthday of the Christian Church that we would take time to  
celebrate our District’s ministry as it turns 70 years old this year.

Our theme is “Chosen with Purpose- Abiding in Jesus” and you are a part of  
this ministry because you were included in that number 53,786 because that  
represents the number of baptized people in our District and we know that in  
our baptism we were all called to be Disciple makers – workers in the  
Kingdom.