

Letter of Hope from the network patrons Bishop Dr. Fredrick Shoo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and Bishop Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Protestant Church in Germany

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: „Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?

⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!

Acts 2 (NIV)

Dear sisters and brothers all over the world,
Dear leaders and teachers of Protestant schools and universities,
Dear students,

Worldwide we celebrate Pentecost: In all continents, in all churches and in Protestant schools around the globe.

We celebrate this year under special circumstances. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools, universities and churches are closed in many parts of the world. Or they can only hold classes and services under special rules of hygiene.

How good that the church year with its festive circle in this year 2020, when everything is so different or will be so soon, is giving us a powerful sign with the feast of Pentecost:

God's Spirit is with us! He moves us! He makes it possible for us Christians to communicate with one another and stand together worldwide, even when states close national borders and people's minds become narrower in fear!



Joining in Reformation

Today, on Sunday, May 31, 2020 we celebrate a worldwide celebration of understanding: Pentecost.

On the day of Pentecost, the birth of the church took place. It took place then and now – worldwide and powerful and wonderful! YOU belong to a global community of people who are touched by the Gospel, who feel the Holy Spirit, who can suddenly communicate even though they speak different native languages. Who are amazed, who are frightened and fascinated at the same time. For they realize that the disciples of Jesus are understandable: They infect us with the inspired joy on their faces. They tell of Christ, the Risen One. People from all the countries that were known in Jerusalem and reachable at that time listen to them. They experience the miracle of being able to communicate even though they are so different. They feel how God's Spirit moves them. They understand the teaching that Peter is taking on that day. Their minds and their hearts notice: „With Christ, God gives me a life of hope. In union with Christ, the Risen One, my Spirit changes, I become joyful and free!“

The one who endured the cross and died torturously on it is not a failed one. He is the one through whom God saves us all – wherever we live. We can communicate worldwide in our schools and universities, in our churches and house communities, because the Spirit of God moves us all.

Give this Spirit much room in you! He will inspire you, teach you to think anew, to speak anew, to listen to one another anew!

For He will embrace each and every one of us! Also in this year 2020, even if school and Christian life is to be arranged just differently than usual. Christ is risen indeed, and God sends us His Spirit so that we can feel this life force in Christ and be Ambassadors of hope!

May you stay healthy and sheltered!

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