

Worship at Home for the 28th May 2023 with Revd Francis M’Itiiri

Call to worship

Dear loving and merciful Lord, we are today reminded that you are at work, within us, through us, around us, everywhere.

Help us to be your Pentecost people, declaring the power of the spirit.

Amen

STF 357– Jesus, the name high over all

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSeAYKG8Ko&pp=ygU2SHltbjogU1RGIDM1NKAKyBKZXN1cywgdGhllG5hbWUgaGlnaCBvdmVyIGFsbCBseXJpY3Mg>

1. Jesus -the name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky!
Angels revere, and nations fall,
And devils fear and fly.

2. Jesus - the name to sinners dear,
The name to sinners given!
It scatters all their guilty fear,
And turns their hell to heaven

3. Jesus, the prisoner's fetters breaks,
And bruises Satan's head;
Power into strengthless souls it speaks,
And life into the dead.

4. O, that the world might taste and see
The riches of His grace!
The arms of love that compass me
Would all the world embrace,

5. His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim;
Tis all my business here below
To cry: "Behold the Lamb".

6. Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death:
"Behold, behold the Lamb!"

Readings: Acts 2:1-21; 13; John 7:37-39

Reflections on the readings

Welcome to the World Day of Pentecost for all humankind. It is international in a sense because Jews across the world traditionally made pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times a year to celebrate; the {i} *Passover* known as *Pesah* in the Spring; {ii} the *Pentecost* or *Shavuot*, celebrated during springtime, and {iii} the *Tabernacle*, which is *Sukkot*, also known as *Festival of Booths* {in autumn} at the end of the harvest time.

Pentecost by name, or feast of weeks or the day of first fruit, in Greek it means 50 days after Passover, celebrating the first buds of the harvest.

If you are celebrating your 50th birthday, or the 50th anniversary of your relationship, or, since your company has formed, or the 50th year of your church mission witness, or the 50th year of serving in the humanitarian sector, or perhaps today is your 50th year of your faithful Christian witness, then, you are the first bud of the Lord's harvest.

Alleluia, Praise the Lord!

Pentecost Sunday is one of those moments in the Church year that disturbs us, that takes us out of our comfort zone and invites us to think again about who we are as a church, and how we are connecting with the Spirit of God that is at work in all things, inviting us to hear again God's call on our lives.

Although the Jews visiting Jerusalem came from different global cultures, they were drawn into Jerusalem to be the first fruit of God's harvest. God visited them and demonstrated he was with them by baptizing them with his holy spirit and was heard speaking with other languages as God's spirit endowed upon them.

In principle, the Holy Ghost prophetically moved the church into a rich heritage of a multicultural diversity under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Making Jesus not only a Saviour to the Jews alone, but also a Lord of the entire human race as it was during creation in Genesis.

The outpouring of the holy spirit during the day of Pentecost was fulfilled by the prophecy of the prophet Joel in Chapter 2 where the Spirit of God was poured out on everyone, sons and daughters.

It is demonstrated that none should ever boast to have the monopoly of God's spiritual gifts. God's spirit is not an exclusive phenomenon, but available to serious seekers who open their hearts to God as in John 7:38-39.

Note the difference when God's spirit came upon the apostles; what happened?

Note another difference when those who claim God's spirit has visited them;

Note the evils, blasphemy, and corruptions associated with them. Is that really God's holy spirit or something else?

He is a spirit of love and harmony, embracing every creed. What we claim to have today, if it brings rifts, competitions, rivalries, suffering, oppression, counterfeit miracles, spiritual bullying, and abuse, then that is not God's spirit but something else.

I feel like God is telling me to tell you; today, is your turn, to experience God's Holy Spirit and be baptized into his love, which is the greatest gift above all.

Where do you find yourself standing on this invitation from God? As you celebrate Pentecost, what do you feel remains an indelible spiritual marking and commemoration of this beautiful day that the Lord has made so that we can rejoice in it?

In the gospel of John 7:37-38, we find the invitation, *'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within'*.

Let this be your prayer for today, come holy spirit fall upon us again, refreshen us and make us your witnesses. **Amen.**

Happy blessed Shavuot dear friends.

Intercessory prayers:

Let us pray,

Heavenly God, pour out your spirit on each one of us, fill the hearts of every nation and its leadership with the fire that cannot be put out, to burn all evil around our world.

Your children are thirsty to be satisfied by your justice and love, guide us on the path you have laid out before us.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on all those who are gathered across the world for the commemoration of your Pentecost.

With your mighty rushing wind, shake forth the foundation of the wicked one, and purify our world with a freshness, we pray. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer {*Can be said in your mother tongue*}

STF 393: She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPb5gO8ASvM&pp=ygUzc2hlIHdhdGVycyBseXJpY3Mg>

1. She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,
Hovering on the chaos of the world's first day:
She sighs, and she sings, mothering creation,
Waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.

2. She wings over earth, resting where she wishes,
Lighting close at hand or soaring through the skies;
She nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder,
Nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.

3. She dances in fire, startling her spectators,
Waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness reigned;
She weans and inspires all whose hearts are open,
Nor can she be captured, silenced, or restrained.

4. For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,
Gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
She is the key opening the scriptures,
Enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

Blessing

Go in peace, Pentecostal people, and may the Spirit of God go with you.

Go in peace, and build a better world, in Jesus' name, **Amen.**

Materials partially adopted from Leeds's Northeast Circuit