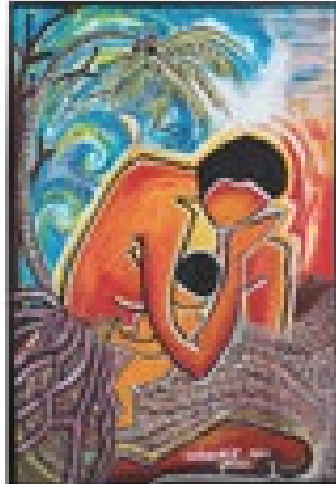


WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
(A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT)



5 MARCH 2021

ADMINISTRATOR'S LETTER



BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

VANUATU



**World day of
Prayer**

5th March 2021

Dalmuir Barclay Church

Online at 2pm

**'Build on a
Strong
Foundation'**

**Service written by the
Christian women of
Vanuatu**

Friday 5th March 2021
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
‘Build on a strong foundation’
Service written by the Christian women of Vanuatu

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Preparation Notes

Plan well in advance of the day of the service: Invite an intergenerational group of girls and women to lead the service. This year, the worship material does not indicate leaders by numbers. Please mark the readings for each leader taking part, according to the size of your local group.

Prepare garland necklaces known as *salu salu (saloo saloo)* at least for the leaders and readers of the worship service to wear. Or invite local congregations to make enough for everyone to wear one! (Google ‘Vanuatu Lei’ for photos and ‘easy paper flower necklace’ for ideas.)

Options to consider: you may wish to choose a short familiar chant to sing between each section of the Voices from Vanuatu. Short prayers of confession and commitment based on the context of your community may be included as indicated on p7 & p8. You may wish to devise a creative or dramatic reading of Matthew 7:24-27.

Rehearse! The leaders will need to rehearse how they will process as they enter the sanctuary (see p5). If possible, have one person competent to beat a gong/drum. The service will be much richer if the leaders lead confidently and clearly – help this to happen by having a full run through in situ.

Practical set up for the service: Prepare a table with a large candle, which should be lit before worship begins. Choose which of the following will be carried in the procession and added to the table, and which will be already on the table - flag of Vanuatu; a banner saying, “Build on a Strong Foundation”; craft items common to Vanuatu (such as sandalwood oil, baskets, beads, conch shells or necklaces); food items (such as root vegetables); a Bible.

Bible Text Matthew 7:24-27, the main text for, “Build on a strong foundation”, focussing on living wisely, should be used for the meditation, sermon or group reflection, allowing us to listen to the word of God, reflect on its message for today and consider how to respond. The Group Reflection (p12,13) may be used in the service or in a small group Bible Study. There is further Bible Study material for small group use on p18-21.

Commissioning Prayer

Towards the end of the service (p16) there is the option of using this prayer, by kind permission of EWNI World Day of Prayer. Some groups use this and find it very meaningful and helpful.

WORSHIP SERVICE PROCESSION

A woman holding an open Bible leads; a few women and children follow, carrying Vanuatu flag and products/symbols chosen beforehand. Singing and dancing up to the altar, they place Bible and products on a table there.

WELCOME

Leader: Welcome to the 2021 World Day of Prayer, prepared by Christian women of the Republic of Vanuatu. We welcome our sisters and brothers around the world in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Vanuatu's culture, languages, traditional values and spirituality have their source in the population of mostly Melanesian and minorities of Polynesian origin. The black and white sandy beaches, coral reefs with coloured fish, lovely birds, fruits and nuts in the forest all make the islands a pristine environment, while they are also vulnerable to frequent tropical storms, earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis and active volcanoes.

In times gone by, each island and village had its own chief and style of governance; its own gods and language. Houses were thatched, constructed from leaves and trees, using stone axes. Women and men would come together at the Farea - the village meeting house - to discuss major issues.

Vanuatu is a small country in the South Pacific Ocean, a Republic formed in 1980 after independence from a French and British Condominium government. Today, Vanuatu proudly waves its flag and its coat of arms declares, "In God we stand."

Song: Father we love you (Mission Praise 142/ Singing the Faith 6)

Donna Adkins © Maranatha Music

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Someone blows a conch shell or beats a drum. Then the leader reads.)

Leader: Let us hear the words in the first verses of Psalm 127 (NIV).

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

All: Happy is everyone who trusts the house-builder, God.

Let us be one of those! Amen.

Song: Listening to the Voices from Vanuatu

Adapted from a hymn written by WDP Vanuatu.

Tune 8787D - many will fit - suggest Ode to Joy (CH4 173) or Lewis Folk Melody (CH

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Let us be thankful for the great things God has done.

Holy, Holy, Holy God,

Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them,

You are present in the history of your people, yesterday to today.

Loving God, on whom Vanuatu stands, we adore you.

For our fellowship with each other and with sisters and brothers around the world gathered by World Day of Prayer,

All: We thank you.

For the great and wonderful things in our lives and nations.

For the authority, wisdom, knowledge and understanding

You grant us, to care for all beautiful islands and countries,

All: We thank you.

For the fertile lands, for the fresh air, clean environment, beautiful sunshine, blue seas and still waters of Vanuatu islands.

All: We thank you.

For the sweet melody of the birds, the sound of land animals,
the mystery of the fish in the sea and rivers. For waterfalls that rain down and serenely declare
your greatness and power,

All: We thank you

For children singing, laughing, shouting; for the prayers and songs of old and young, manifesting
the joy of your love,

All: Praises, glory and honour be to you alone forever.

Life-Giving God, receive our praise.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Let us confess to God, who is faithful and just to forgive us.

(1 John 1:9).

Our Father in heaven, your name is holy. We stand in your house of grace to confess that we
have listened to your words but have not acted on them. We do the things we should not do
and leave undone the things we should.

(Silence)

We face adversities and challenges in our homes and nations. We build our homes, thinking we
are building on the words of Jesus Christ, but actually building on sand. We long to be changed.
Restore us, that we may do what is right and just.

(If desired, insert here a short prayer of confession based on the local context)

Creator God, we confess that we have polluted the environment and harmed the creatures of the
sea by throwing rubbish into their habitats. We endanger marine life and ruin sustainable
livelihoods. We know we can change.

(Silence)

We confess and regret our wrongdoing and commit ourselves to fulfilling the mandate to be good
stewards of your creation.

All: God, hear our prayers.

Prayer of Commitment

Leader: God is looking for a house to live in. Where is the house that you will build for me?

Where will my resting place be?

(Isaiah 66:1-2, NIV).

We come humbly before you and pray that you will grant us
your Spirit of wisdom and knowledge.

(Silence)

Teach us to discern the truth. Lead and guide us that we may live in a way that is pleasing and
acceptable to you.

(If desired, insert here a short prayer of commitment based on the local context)

Humbly we offer ourselves to be a house that you can dwell in.

**All: By the power of your word, transform our lives and
our nations. Make us a household of justice and peace.**

Gracious God, accept our commitment.

Song: Christ be beside me (Church Hymnary 4th Edition 577)

St Patrick's Breastplate adapted James Quinn. Tune: Bunessan

LISTENING TO THE VOICES FROM VANUATU

Rhetoh: This is the story of Rhetoh. She is the second child from a family of eight. Rhetoh left
school at 11, as her family could only afford continued education for her older brother and not
Rhetoh, as she was the second born and a girl. One day, hearing there was a sewing class for girls

at a local centre, she applied and was accepted, but was disheartened that her dad had no money to pay the fees, and nor did she have her own money to finance her studies.

With a strong desire to enhance her education but no opportunity to do so in the formal school system, Rhetoh turned her attention to the church as a place of learning. She joined the youth group, attended bible studies, and later, got involved with the women's ministry. With determination and faith, she found ways to educate herself and acquired skills to earn a living. She now makes items and sells them at the Mamas' Markets where other women like her, with little education, provide for their families with their new skills.

Blessed with three children, Rhetoh and her husband care for their God-given family, praising God for the blessings of their lives. Rhetoh thanks God for being the source of her strength, and for helping her put into practice what she has learned. She has become strong and wise in the Lord.

(sing the verse 'Someone's praying Lord, kum ba yah' MP 149)

Reader: In Vanuatu, many children in the rural areas walk long distances to school. Some have to leave home and attend boarding school from a very young age. Education for all is not mandatory. The school system is either in French or English. Bislama is a learned language to overcome communication barriers in the towns, but in rural areas they also have their own languages. Equal access to school for boys and girls is still a work in progress.

Mothy: This is the story of Mothy. She and her little brother grew up in a single parent home. When their mother re-married, she left the children with their grandparents. After Mothy's dad remarried, he took the children to live with his new family. After their stepmother had children of her own, her attitude towards Mothy and her brother changed altogether.

As there were more children to feed, and no room in the house for all of them, Mothy had to find her own food in the streets and slept outside the house in a shack. She used an old copra sack as a blanket to protect her from the cold.

She met some Christians who told her that God loved her. Mothy could not understand this kind of love in the midst of her suffering, but she decided to trust that God would take care of her, even though her family was not sheltering her. This trust grew inside her and became the foundation of her life. She is now strong in her Christian faith, and shares her story with others that we should trust in God and his provision.

Today, she prays for children like her, growing up almost by themselves. May they know that God loves them and may children in every country around the world find a home.

(sing the verse 'Someone's praying Lord, kum ba yah')

Reader: Vanuatu's estimated population growth is one of the highest in the Pacific region. Malnutrition is a concern in both rural and urban areas. Although there's a strong tradition of growing organic food in gardens, the powdered milk and junk food industries are gaining access to babies and children.

Jacklynda: This is the story of Jacklynda. She comes from a rural village. From her youth she had dreamt of working in tourism in Port Vila. She travelled there to get a job in hospitality, but she didn't have the training for her dream job. Jacklynda has no family in Port Vila, so she is living on the outskirts of the city, having no money for proper accommodation, food or the fare to return to her village. She knows that this is not the plan God has for her, but she doesn't know what to do. She prays that the rural area of Vanuatu be valued and young people find the opportunities they search for in their own communities. She trusts that God will provide for young people to grow and contribute to the wellbeing of Vanuatu.

(sing the verse 'Someone's praying Lord, kum bay

Reader: With 75% of the population in rural areas with few employment options, young people have to migrate to the city. They go with minimal education and no trained skills to enable them to get work. High unemployment amongst young people creates a generation that sees no future, which is a great loss for the country. There is a need for policies and programmes for the betterment of the rural area, where the young people can stay in the community to be educated and have jobs.

Song: Jesus Christ is waiting (CH4 360)

© WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G5 9JP, Scotland. Tune:

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Leader: Let us hear the Word of God according to the Gospel of Matthew chapter 7, verses 24-27, where one of Jesus' parables is recorded:

“So then, anyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them is like a wise person who built their house on rock. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, and the wind blew hard against that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on rock.

“But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them is like a foolish person who built their house on sand. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, the wind blew hard against that house, and it fell. And what a terrible fall that was!”

Please use the parable and theme “Build on a strong foundation” to elaborate the meditation, sermon or group reflection.

Introduction to the Group Reflection:

Our reflection is based on three chapters of Matthew's Gospel known as the Sermon on the Mount - the teachings of Jesus on the Kingdom of heaven. The parable of the house builders concludes the teaching that begins with the Beatitudes, found in Chapter 5. Jesus' words herald a new and challenging way of living.

The teachings of the Sermon on the Mount encourage two things: **hear and act** or **listen and do**. The Kingdom Jesus proclaims will grow depending on the choices people make and the actions people take. The final picture in his teaching on the mountain is a short parable of comparison. The house of the wise builder was safe and secure in the storm while the house of the foolish one was lost. It is wise to hear and act on Jesus' words, building firm foundations in life. It is foolish not to, and a weak foundation leads to disaster. Let us consider this carefully in making our own decisions in life.

Reflect on the following questions and share your thoughts with someone near you:

At the conclusion of his teaching, Jesus emphasises hearing and acting.

- How has WDP helped you to hear and act on the words of Jesus?
- In your own context, how do you build strong foundations in community or Christian fellowship? Can you share an example from your experience?
- How does the story of the wise and foolish builders challenge you in your Christian discipleship today?

Conclusion: Let us rise and build our homes, our nations and our world on the words of Jesus, who reminds us of the golden rule - “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.” This is the guiding principle of Jesus' teaching for us today. This is our solid foundation.

OFFERING *(as usual in the community)*

Song: I'll hide God's word inside my heart (JP 378, adapted)

Original version: Peter and Hanneke Jacobs
Tune: LM – suggest Fulda (CH4 363/ StF 418) or Church Triumphant (CH4 129)

Offering prayer

Leader: Gracious God, we worship and thank you for all the blessings you have given us – families, friends, homes, food and water. We praise you for enabling us to be creative and to support our families. We offer you a small portion of these blessings of money and service. We dedicate them to the ongoing work of World Day of Prayer, that these gifts will be shared with communities in need, here and around the world. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR VANUATU AND THE WORLD

Prayer of Intercession

Leader: Let us be united in prayer with Vanuatu and the worldEverlasting God, the God on whom Vanuatu stands, help us stand for peace in our families and in our nations. We commit the leaders and people of Vanuatu into your wise hands.

Help us stand against the forces of injustice and division present in our nations.

We pray that in Vanuatu and everywhere, we can all live in unity, love and peace, respecting and celebrating ethnic and cultural diversity.

All: Bind us together in love, peace and joy.

Leader: We ask for your protection for people living in places prone to cyclones, hurricanes and volcanoes and the damage they cause.

We bring you our concerns for those suffering from addictions.

All: Almighty God, protect our communities from disasters and suffering. Heal the souls of your people; let them feel love.

Leader: Let's pray together the Lord's Prayer.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;

thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Song: Let us build a house (CH4 198 / StF 409))

© GIA Words & Music: Marty Haugen Tune: Two Oaks

Commissioning Prayer (Optional)

Pass the large lit candle from the table to a representative of next year's host church and say the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the World Day of Prayer which is taking place throughout the world today, and has been prepared by the Christian women of Vanuatu.

Many Christians gather together to praise you and we thank the Priests/ Ministers/ Pastors and people of (host church) for hosting this world-wide service of prayer in Scotland.

With joy we pass this candle to (rep's name) who represents (next host church) who will host next year's service, prepared by Christian women of England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

SENDING AND BLESSING

Leader: God's dwelling presence is in and with us.

Let God guide you, lead you, restore you, and heal your nation.

Let God's will be done in your house, as it is in heaven.

Go, and build your house wisely, according to Jesus' words.

Go with these blessings

in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and King.

All: This is our strong foundation –

we will follow Jesus,

who is the way, the truth and the life.

Amen.

Recessional: The day you gave us (CH4 220/ StF 147)

John Ellerton Tune: St Clement

VANUATI FACT SHEET

2000 Miles east of Australia lies an archipelago of islands called Vanuati. It is made up from 82 islands, 65 of which are inhabited. The capital is Port Vila on the island of Efate.

Vanuati has sandy beaches, beautiful coral reefs, tropical fish, forests full of beautiful birds, abundant flora and fauna a wonderful group of islands.

It has no large mammals, poisonous snakes or spiders. The climate is temperate and the soil fruitful. The area is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and cyclones.

Natives of Vanuati are known as Ni-Vanuati to them land is very important, not viewed as something to be owned but vital to human existence. To Ni-Vanuati see the land as a mother sees her child. Traditionally the Vanuati family look after each other and although modern technology is changing things they identify with their natural culture.

Named Espiritu Santo in 1606 by the Spanish it was renamed New Hebrides by Captain Cook in 1774. By 1906 the group known as New Hebrides was jointly managed by France and the United Kingdom. The islands remained stateless with no land rights until 1980 when they became independent and known as the Republic of Vanuati. Vanuati means "country that stands" and their motto is "In God we stand"

Today it is mostly Melanesian, with a Polynesian minority and a population of 3000,000.

113 Languages are spoken, more languages than anywhere else in the world. Bislama (a mixture of the native languages, French and English are the main languages.

Education is not compulsory and not free. Most families can only fund the education of the first born though over past 20 years the gap in literacy and education has narrowed. Government subsidises the first 6 years of education Secondary only available to those who can afford it. There is a wide economical gap between the haves and don't haves.

Malnutrition is a growing problem aggravated by the introduction of western foods. Most arable land tends to be used for cash crops and cattle rather than food crops for local consumption.

60% of women and children suffer from sexual and physical violence. The health of women and children is key note to the governments priorities.

Safe drinking water and adequate sanitation is a problem with some Ni-Vanuati having to walk over an hour to find water.

The islands economic growth is dependent on tourism, off shore financial services and construction. Much of the tourism trade is owned by foreign hotel owners and the proceeds leave the country.

Employment is scarce and many of the young folks find themselves without food, water or housing.

40% of the work force is women and opportunity is limited due as they lack access to capital. Gender equality is constitutional but not implemented. There is more female headed households compared to male.

75% of the population live in rural areas which are very under resourced.

Originally each island in the archipelago had its own gods, customs and culture. They did not worship animals or plants but believed there was a creator somewhere in the heavens.

Village chiefs were the custodians of their territories and determined what took place under their jurisdiction. Issues were debated and concerns discussed but men were mainly the decision makers.

Today Christianity has changed governance to a more centralised system.

83% of the population are currently Christian. Presbyterianism is the largest denomination.

WDP was introduced to the islands in 1981. Christian working groups have continued to work with the women through the creation of The Woman's Desk of the Vanuati Christian Council.

They were invited to develop the WDP resources for 2021 in 2018 and their prayer is that the ecumenical relationships they have experienced during the blessing of working together for the 2021 programme will lift up the voice of Vanuati women across the world. All are confident that this will bring a new assurance to Vanuati's women's voices.

Please pray for the people of Vanuati as they cope with the aftermath of category – 5 Cyclone Harold which devastated the islands in April 2020. Recovery is an immense challenge.

With Vanuati meaning “country that stands” and their motto “In God we stand” they have chosen the story of the wise man and the foolish man from the Book of Matthew as the theme for 2021 WDP “BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION”

The Vanuati sisters praise God for fertile land, the song of birds and the voice of children. Through these they praise God while they pursue opportunities in education, keep malnutrition away and provide alternatives for young people.

May we join in their prayers for a more promising future where the voice of all is heard and opportunity available to everyone. In receiving their voice as a gift of wisdom, we share their hope and creatively engage our communities in “Informed Prayer and prayerful action.

VANUATI FLAG



BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION