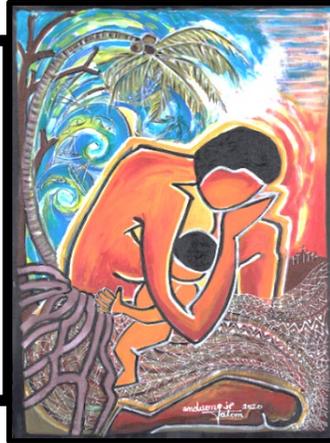
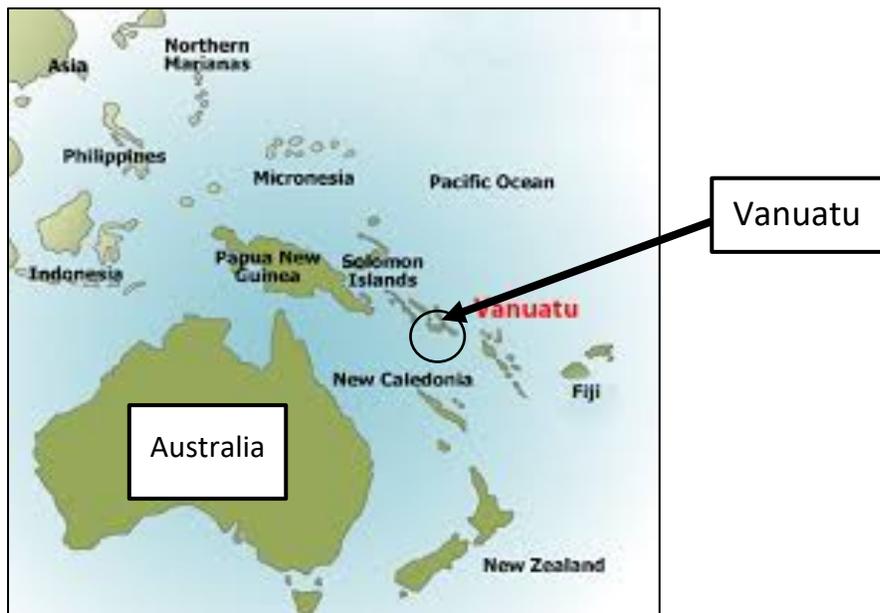


*Juliette Pita's artwork depicts a mother praying and sheltering her child under a tree with strong roots during a cyclone*



# ***World Day of Prayer Worship Service*** **Vanuatu 2021** **BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION**

*The 2021 service was written by the Vanuatu World Day of Prayer Committee. This worship booklet was prepared and adapted for use in Canada by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada.*



## WE GATHER ONLINE

*The Very Rev Ken Gray, Dean of St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral will manage the technology and will give zoom instructions as we gather.*

*A link to the script of today's service may be found in the chat. To eliminate background noise, microphones will be off except for speakers and when we break into discussion groups. For the most part, music is captioned so you may sing along at home.*

*Following this service, everyone is encouraged to watch their original video prepared by the WICC and the women of Vanuatu and learn more about World Day of Prayer events, background and grants found on the website <https://wicc.org/world-day-of-prayer/>*

### *Greetings to You*

#### **Joy Gothard**

Today's *World Day of Prayer* service originates from Kamloops, BC the traditional unceded territory of the *Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Kamloops and area First Nation*. We acknowledge their care for and working of the land prior to contact with Europeans. We likewise acknowledge Indigenous, Metis and Innu Lands across our country and the globe.

Our service draws on video and other materials prepared in Vanuatu and by Women's Interchurch Council of Canada, including music, reflections and information. The leaders of today's service will now introduce themselves:

- St. Albans, Ashcroft: Rev. **Martina Duncan** >Leader 1
- Holy Family Roman Catholic Parish: **Theresa Lidster** >Leader 2
- Hills of Peace Lutheran Church: **Elaine Stefura** >Reader 1
- St. Andrews Presbyterian: **Berna Porter** >Reader 2
- Kamloops United Church: **Sharon Rhodes** >Reader 3
- St. Peter's Anglican, Monte Creek: **Tivola Howe** >Devotional
- Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Cathedral: **Dani Schoof** >discussion group
- St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral: **Joy Gothard, Rae Long** >discussion leaders

#### **Martina Duncan**

Welcome to World Day of Prayer 2021, prepared by the Christian women of the Republic of Vanuatu (VAH-noo-AH-too). We welcome our sisters and brothers around the world in the name of Jesus.

Vanuatu is a small country of islands located in the South Pacific Ocean. The black and white sandy beaches, coral reefs with coloured fish, lovely birds, and fruits and nuts in the forest, all make the islands a pristine environment, even though they are vulnerable to frequent tropical storms, earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis and active volcanoes.

Melanesian people, along with Polynesian, are the primary source of Vanuatu's culture, languages, traditional values, and spirituality. Each island and village used to have their own chief and style of governance, their own gods, and their own language. Their thatched houses were made from leaves and trees, using stone axes. Women and men would come together at the Farea ("fear-e-a"; village meeting house) to discuss major issues.

The Republic of Vanuatu was formed after independence in 1980 from a French and British Condominium government. Today, Vanuatu proudly waves its flag and its coat of arms which reads, "In God we stand."

### *My hope is built on Nothing Less*

#### **Theresa Lidster**

Let's read together the words of worship as found in the first verse of Psalm 127.

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.  
Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain.

Let us respond together:

**Happy is everyone who trusts the housebuilder, God.  
Let us be one of those! Amen.**

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. God is present in the history of all people from yesterday to today. Loving God, on whom Vanuatu stands, we adore you.

Thank you for the fellowship with each other and with sisters and brothers around the world gathered by World Day of Prayer.

Thank you for the great and wonderful things in our lives and in our nations. You grant us authority, wisdom, knowledge and understanding to care over all beautiful islands and countries.

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

Thank you for the sweet melody of the birds, the sound of land animals, and the mystery of the fish in the sea and rivers. Thank you for the waterfalls that rain down their waters, and serenely declare to us your greatness and power.

Thank you for the sound of children singing, laughing, shouting, and for the prayers and songs of the old and young, all of which manifest the joy of your love.

Let us respond together:

**Praises, glory and honour be unto you alone forever.  
Life-giving God receive our praise.**

### **Martina Duncan**

Let's confess to God, who is faithful and just to forgive us (I John 1:9).

God, we stand before your house of grace to confess our sins. We confess that we have listened to your word but have not acted on it. Often, we do the things we ought not to do and leave undone the things we ought to do.

We face adversities and challenges in our homes and nations. We try to build our homes, thinking we are building on the words of Jesus Christ, but we have actually built on the sand. We want to be changed; restore us back to do what is right and just.

Creator God, we confess that we have polluted the environment and harmed the sea creatures by throwing garbage into their habitats. We have endangered marine life and ruined sustainable livelihoods. We know we can change. We confess regret and commit to fulfill the mandate to be good stewards of your creation.

*Please add local and national concerns.*

Let us respond together:  
**God, hear our prayers.**

Rejoice and be glad!  
Our God is full of mercy and abounding in steadfast love.  
Through Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Amen.**

### **Theresa Lidster**

God is looking for a house in which to live. In Isaiah 66: 1-2, God asks:  
What is the house that you would build for me?

We come humbly before you and pray that you will grant us your Spirit of wisdom and knowledge. Teach us to discern the truth. Lead and guide us to live in a way that is pleasing and acceptable to you.

Humbly we offer ourselves to be a house where you can dwell. By the power of your word, transform our lives and our nations. Make us a household of justice and peace.

Let us respond together:  
**Gracious God accept our commitment.**

*Halle, Halle, Halle*

### WE HEAR SOME VOICES FROM VANUATU

#### **Elaine Stefura**

Today, I am reading Rhetoh's story. I am the second child from a family of eight. I left school at the end of year 6 as there was no money to continue my education. My family could only afford to educate my older brother, and not me, as I am the second born, and a girl. One day I heard there was a sewing class for girls at a local center. I applied and was accepted, but my dad had no money to pay the fees. I was disheartened but I did not have my own money to finance my studies.

I sincerely desired to enhance my education but there was no opportunity in a formal school system. Then I turned my attention to the church to fill my desire to learn. I joined the youth group, attended Bible studies, and later, got involved with the women's ministry. With this determination and faith in God, I found ways to educate myself, and even acquired skills to

earn a living to provide for my family. I now make items and sell them at the Mamas Market where other women like me, with little education, can earn a living with this new skill.

I care for my family with whom God blessed me. My husband and I have three children. I praise God for the blessings over my life. I thank God for being the source of my strength, and for helping me put into practice what I have learned. I have become strong and wise in the Lord.

### **Berna Porter**

In Vanuatu, many children in the rural areas walk long distances to go to school, some even must leave home and attend boarding school at 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 town, but in rural areas they also have their own languages. Equal access of boys and girls attending school is still in progress.

### **Sharon Rhodes**

Today, I am reading Mothy's story. My little brother and I grew up in a single parent home. When my mother remarried, she left us with our grandparents. After my dad remarried, he took us to live with his new family. When our stepmother gave birth to her children, her attitude towards us changed altogether.

With more children to feed, and no room in the house for all the children, I had to find my own food in the streets and slept outside the house in a shack. I used an old copra sack as a blanket to protect me from the cold. Somehow, I met some Christians who told me that God loved me. I could not understand this kind of love in the midst of my suffering, but I decided to trust. I trusted that God would take care of me, even though my family was not sheltering me. This trust grew inside me and became the foundation of my life.

I am strong in my Christian faith and share my story with others that we should trust in God and God's provision. Today, I pray for those children who, like me, grew up almost by themselves. We know that God loves them, and we pray a home for children may be provided in every country around the world.

### **Elaine Stefura**

Vanuatu's population growth is one of the highest in the Pacific region. Malnutrition is a concern in both rural and urban areas. Although the tradition of growing organic staples in gardens is strong, the food industries of powdered milk and unhealthy, processed products are getting access to babies and children.

### **Berna Porter**

Today, I am reading Jacklynda's story. I come from a rural village. Ever since I was a young girl, I dreamt of working in tourism in Port Vila. I travelled to Port Vila, to get a job in hospitality, but I don't have the training to get the job I dream of. I have no family here, so I am living on the outskirts of the city. I have no money for proper accommodation, food or even to return to my village. I know that this is not the plan God has for me, but I don't know what to do. I pray that rural areas of Vanuatu be valued, and young people find the opportunities they search for in their own communities. I trust that God will provide for young people to grow and contribute to the wellbeing of Vanuatu.

### **Sharon Rhodes**

With 75% of the population in rural areas with little employment options, young people must migrate to areas with economic opportunities. They come with minimal education and no trained skills to enable them to gain employment in the city. 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 programs for the betterment of rural areas, so young people can stay in these communities to be educated and have jobs.

## **WE LISTEN TOGETHER**

### **Martina Duncan**

Let's hear the word of God according to the Gospel of Matthew 7:24-27.

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

## **Martina Duncan**

The main Bible text for the Vanuatu program comes from the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, found in the book of Matthew chapters 5 to 7.

Jesus is concerned about the hungry and thirsty crowd that went to the mountain and heard the word of God to live better lives. It gives context to what Jesus says about his words being heard and acted upon in verse 24. It is not an empty instruction; behind it is the full understanding of Jesus' ministry and the kingdom of heaven.

All the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount deliberate on two verbs – to hear and to act. The results that will come depend on the choices that are made, and the actions taken. Jesus' closing words for his teaching on the mountain is a story of comparison. The wise builder is safe while the foolish one loses his house. The wise act on Jesus' words while the foolish do not. Let us consider this carefully prior to making our own decisions in life.

*We will now be placed into small groups for approximately 15 minutes. Questions will be sent directly to each group and will also be placed in the chat. You will need to agree to be placed in a group. If you do not wish to join a small group, simply remain in the main room. You will be given a warning before our screens return to the service.*

## **Theresa Lidster**

Please reflect on the following questions:

- ✓ The crowds are astounded at Jesus' teaching (7: 28). How do Jesus' words speak to you?
- ✓ Can you describe a situation when you heard and acted upon Jesus' words?
- ✓ How can one demonstrate wisdom in the community?

**Conclusion:** Let us rise and build our homes, our nations and the world on the words of Jesus, who reminded us about the golden rule - "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you" (7:12). This is our solid foundation. This is the basic principle of our message today.

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE – **Major Shirley King** WICC

## **Martina Duncan**

The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical women led movement. Each year, we admire the strength of the communities who participate; we empathize with their cares; we are encouraged by their faith; and we stand in solidarity with each other through our prayers and actions.

In Canada, under the leadership of WICC, your offering funds World Day of Prayer as well as grants for projects to restore hope to women touched by injustice. A list of approved WDP 2019-2020 projects is included in this booklet. For further details, including the 2020 grants and WICC's response to COVID-19, go to [www.wicc.org](http://www.wicc.org)

## *What does the Lord require of you*

### PRAYERS

## **Martina Duncan**

Gracious God, we thank you and worship you for all the blessings you have bestowed upon us, for family and friends, home, food, and water. We praise you for leading us to be creative and able to support our families. We offer to you a small portion of these blessings of money and service. We dedicate them to the World Day of Prayer that will share these gifts with the communities in need here and around the world. Amen.

## **Theresa Lidster**

Let us be united in prayer with Vanuatu and the world.

Everlasting God, the God on whom Vanuatu stands, we ask you to help us stand for peace in all nations and in all families. We commit the leaders and people of Vanuatu into your wise hands. We want to stand against the forces of injustice present in our nations. Give us this authority over our islands and nations.

We pray that we can live in unity, love, and peace in the context of ethnic and cultural diversity like Vanuatu and so many other places around the world.

We are grateful for any positive community building that resulted from COVID-19.

Let us respond together:

**Bind us together in love, peace, and joy.**

We remember people living in places prone to natural disasters and the hazards of cyclones, hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis, and those experiencing food shortages and famine.

We lift up our concerns for those who suffer internal anguish from substance addictions and loneliness. We pray for victims of domestic and gender-based violence, and other forms of marginalization.

Let us respond together:

**Almighty God,  
protect communities.  
from disasters and suffering.  
Heal the souls of the people,  
and let them feel the love.**

Let's pray together the Lord's Prayer.

**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,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

*Here I am Lord*

## SENDING AND BLESSING

### **Martina Duncan**

We welcome God's dwelling presence 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.

Remember, as you go out, everyone who hears the words of Jesus and acts on them will be like a wise person and the house will withstand the floods. Go and build your house on Jesus' words.

Go home with these blessings in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and King.

Let us respond together:

**This is our strong foundation  
we will follow Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*We thank the WICC for the resources that have prepared us to bring you this service today and encourage you to watch the original video prepared by the WICC and the women of Vanuatu found on the website: <https://wicc.org/world-day-of-prayer/>*

*Optional Vanuatu background video (10 mins.) <https://youtu.be/orWE3TCR59U>*