



World Day of Prayer 2021

March 5, 2021 • Build on a Strong Foundation • Matthew 7:24–27



Supplemental Material

About Vanuatu • Bible Study • Publicity Tools • and More





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About World Day of Prayer

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer and action each year on the first Friday in March. Each year a different country serves as the writer of the World Day of Prayer worship service, interpreting the Bible in their own context, and lifting up issues of mission, justice and peace that are important to them. Offerings collected during the services are granted by WDP national committees to nonprofit organizations that deal with the issues identified by the writer-country. The WDP motto is “Informed prayer, prayerful action.” World Day of Prayer USA promotes justice and equality for women through prayer, partnerships, service, and celebration.

About World Day of Prayer 2021

This year, the women of the World Day of Prayer Committee of Vanuatu call us to worship with the words “Build on a strong foundation,” inspired by Matthew 7:24–27. We are invited to learn about Vanuatu’s history and rich culture. The women share their stories of intergenerational wisdom, traditions, and experiences of God’s profound love.

The WDP 2020 program explores the passage in which Jesus tells a story about the kingdom of heaven, using the image of a house and the land on which the house is built. Choosing the land on which to build a

house is an important decision for people in Vanuatu. Considering both the terrain and the climate is crucial in a tropical archipelago located in the South Pacific Ocean and prone to earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions and rising sea levels.

In Jesus’ story, the wisdom of the builder of the house comes from hearing and acting on the word of God, which is a word of love. This is the foundation on which our sisters call us to build our homes, our nations, and the world. A call of faith to be earnestly considered when responding to the prayer of commitment: “What is the house that you would build?”

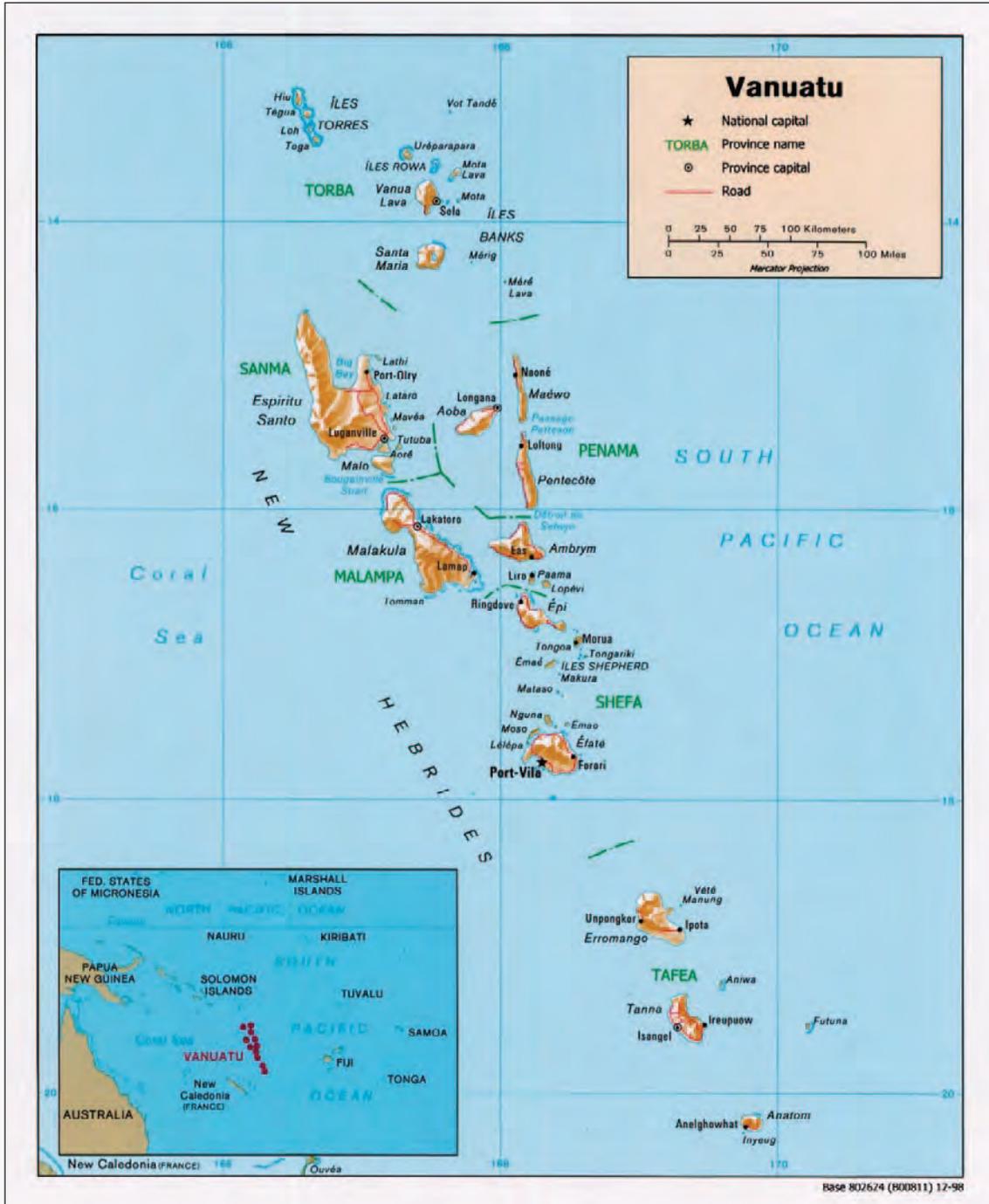
About the World Day of Prayer 2021 Art

Juliette Pita’s painting, *Cyclone Pam II: 13th of March 2015*, shows a mother praying over her child. The waves crash over her, but a palm tree bends protectively over them. Its roots are able to withstand strong winds. On the horizon, small crosses represent the lives taken by Cyclone Pam. The woman’s skirt is modeled after the traditional clothing of Erromango.

Juliette was born in 1964 on Erromango Island, the third of eight children. Her motifs are taken from the traditional culture of Vanuatu, but also from her current life. She works part-time as a fabric painter on sarongs that tourists can buy in the city center. She also sells paintings to tourists in Port Vila. Her children, too, are artists and sell paintings to pay their school fees.

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Vanuatu map and all other images courtesy of WDP Vanuatu.

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The People

The inhabitants of Vanuatu and their culture are known as ni-Vanuatu. Most ni-Vanuatu are of Melanesian descent, with a Polynesian minority on the outlying islands. A mix of Europeans, Asians and other Pacific Islanders also live on the archipelago. In 2020, the population was nearly 307,000. Studies predict that, in 2021, Vanuatu will have 312,000 inhabitants.

Most of the people of Vanuatu live in rural areas, although the cities of Port Vila and Luganville have sizable populations. Port Vila is Vanuatu's largest city, with 45,000 inhabitants, accounting for 19 percent of the country's total population.

Vanuatu is embracing modern technology but is also proud to retain its cultural identity in its traditional attire, food, dances, and songs.

Ni-Vanuatu staple foods include yams, taro, bananas, coconut, sugarcane, tropical nuts, greens, pigs, fowl, and seafood. Pigs are exchanged and eaten

at all important rituals and celebrations. The national ceremonial dish is *lap lap*, a pudding made of grated root plants, vegetables, or plantains mixed with coconut milk and sometimes greens and meat wrapped in leaves, then baked for hours in a traditional earth oven. The exchange, preparation, and consumption of *kava* (a beverage made from kava roots) are integral parts of ceremonial occasions.

Land and Identity

Vanuatu is a beautiful country of many islands and home to people of many ethnic groups and languages. The islands have both black and white sand beaches and beautiful coral reefs with brightly colored tropical fish. The forests are full of lovely birds, flora, and other fauna, and spectacular waterfalls.

Land is important to the ni-Vanuatu and is crucial resource for production. Land is not viewed as a thing to be owned but as vital to the existence of humans and animals. The honorable retired pastor Sethy Regenvanu, former deputy prime minister of lands, once stated, "Land to a ni-Vanuatu is what a mother is to a baby. It is with land that he defines his identity and it is with land that he maintains his spiritual strength" (quoted in Howard van Trease, 1987).



Coconuts are one of the staple foods for people of Vanuatu.



Champagne Beach, Espiritu Santo

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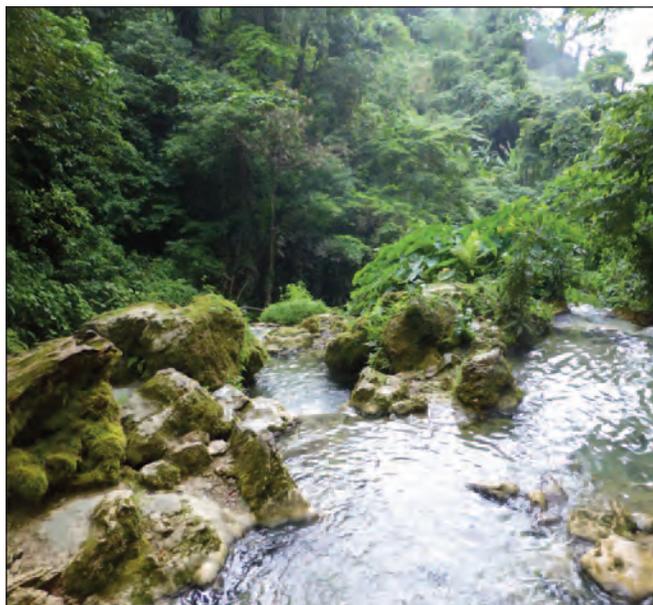
Language

Vanuatu is a small country that, at one point, had more spoken languages than any place in the world. By 2004, less than 100 of these languages remained due to the use of Bislama, a language that evolved from broken English, French, and the traditional languages. Due to the country's colonial history, the English and French languages have been adopted as the official languages of education.

There are strong links between local languages, places, and identities. A ni-Vanuatu usually speaks their village language as well as Bislama before learning English or French. The emergence of Bislama facilitated communication nationwide but put local languages at risk of disappearance.

Geography

Vanuatu is a Y-shaped tropical archipelago located in the Southwest Pacific Ocean, with more than 80 islands, 65 of which are inhabited. The Solomon Islands lie to the north, New Caledonia lies to the



Cascade Water Falls

south, Fiji to the east, and the Coral Sea and Australia to the west. The mostly volcanic archipelago extends 560 miles (900 kilometers) from north to south and has an area of 5,700 square miles (14,760 square kilometers). Espiritu Santo is the largest island; Port Vila, the capital, which was also the colonial headquarters, is on the south-central island of Efate.

The islands are prone to natural disasters, including earthquakes, cyclones, and volcanic eruptions. There are seven active volcanoes scattered throughout the islands. A volcano on the island of Ambae erupted in September of 2017 and again in 2018. The entire population—about 11,000 people—was evacuated. Rising sea levels threaten to erode the land, and pollution from vehicle fumes, oil from boats, and plastic waste negatively impact the environment. In 2018, the government passed a law banning the use of plastic bags in Vanuatu.



Mount Yasur

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Each year, Vanuatu can expect an average of eight to ten cyclones. Cyclone Pam, a Category 5 tropical cyclone, hit the island nation in March 2015. It was one of the worst cyclones on record. Around 75,000 people needed emergency shelter and 96 percent of the crops were destroyed.



Cyclone Pam



Rebuilding after Cyclone Pam

Religion

“The physical, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the 100,000 or so indigenous inhabitants of the sixty-three occupied islands is extreme even for the western Pacific, a diversity that is fully reflected in religious belief and practice. While the dominant traits in all contexts may be described as Melanesian, Polynesian influences, including those pertaining to religion, are sufficiently widespread and important to set this area apart from the rest of Melanesia” (Encyclopedia.com, 2020). Many aspects of pre-colonial beliefs remain a part of the religious life of the ni-Vanuatu.

“The traditional religions of Vanuatu . . . have as their identifying theme . . . the nature and locus of supernatural powers . . . mostly associated with various classes of spirit beings [and] commonly attributed to a wide range of ‘natural’ phenomena, including humans, animals, birds, fish, plants, and stones. It is this diffuseness of supernatural power, together with its transferability, by means of ritual . . . that gives Vanuatu religions their distinctive character” (Encyclopedia.com, 2020). R. H. Codrington noted that the ni-Vanuatu “recognized two classes of spirits, those who were once living people and those who were not” (Encyclopedia.com).

The peoples of Vanuatu had their own ways of worship; islands and groups of islands had their own gods and their own areas where the dead were supposed to have gone to rest. For example, the province of Torba had Quat, Malo Island had Tokotaitai, Penama Province had Takaro, the Shepherd Islands in Shefa Province had Supwe, and Futuna in Tafea Province had Majikjiki. Every community still has places associated with their ancestry and other spirits. These “taboo places” may be mountain peaks, offshore reef formations, or rocky outcroppings. People avoid these locations and treat them with respect.

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Missionaries and explorers, traders and “blackbirders” (traffickers who lured, tricked and kidnapped Pacific islanders to work on plantations in other countries) arrived in Vanuatu in the nineteenth century. The missionaries—first European, then Polynesian—divided the islands, united in their goal of bringing Christianity to Vanuatu. Catholic missionaries went to the south; Presbyterian missionaries traveled to Efate; Anglicans traveled north; and Seventh Day Adventists went to Malakula. Presbyterians established their first church in Vanuatu in 1852 and are, currently, the largest denomination in Vanuatu.

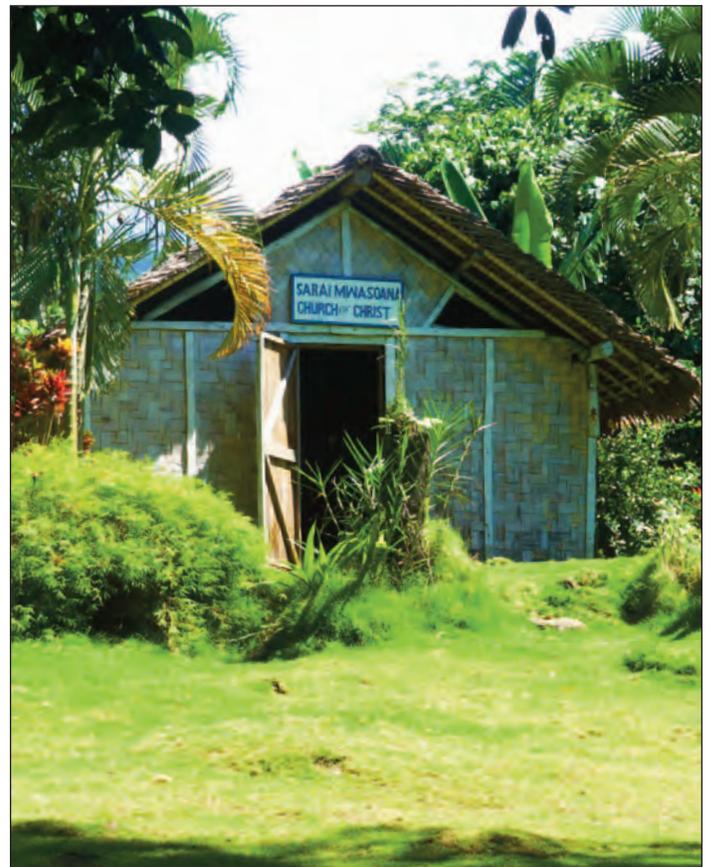
Today, Christians comprise approximately 83 percent of the total population, while 17 percent is made up of adherents of other religious groups, beliefs and cults. The people worship through song and dance, enhanced with Vanuatu traditions and cultures. Christian churches represented include Presbyterian,

Anglican, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, and Church of Christ. The Vanuatu Christian Council provides a platform for churches to work ecumenically across the islands.

Christianity deeply impacted ancestral culture and religious practices, as well as the system of governance and social life. The Christians who came to Vanuatu were opposed to the practice of cannibalism and considered the local religions to be witchcraft. The villages, once a decentralized system of life, changed to a centralized form of governance, as people moved to be near where missionaries built churches, schools, and hospitals.



Presbyterian Church



Church of Christ

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Explorers

In 1606, the first foreign explorer arrived in Vanuatu, a Spaniard named De Quiros. De Quiros arrived on the northern island of Santo and renamed it Australis Del Espiritu Santo. In 1768, a Frenchman, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, sailed through the islands. In 1774, Scottish explorer Captain James Cook came to the islands and named them New Hebrides, because the islands reminded him of his homeland, the Hebrides of Scotland.

After these explorers came the “blackbirders” and traders of knives, guns, alcohol, tobacco and axes. The term blackbirding refers to the large-scale kidnapping of people indigenous to the islands in the Pacific Ocean to work as unpaid or poorly paid laborers in countries far from their native land. Blackbirding was especially prevalent between 1847 and 1904, when South Pacific islanders were kidnapped, tricked or coerced into working on the cotton and sugar plantations in



Flag of Vanuatu

Queensland, Fiji and Hawaii. Blackbirders and other traders introduced new diseases that killed thousands of people in Vanuatu.

The Condominium government

In 1906, New Hebrides became a colony jointly ruled by Great Britain and France. The New Hebrides Condominium had a joint court but Great Britain and France ran separate administrative bureaucracies, medical systems, police forces, and school systems. Meanwhile, natives of New Hebrides were stateless in their own homeland, as they were neither French nor British nor New Hebridean citizens. They had no legal identity, no rights, no passports, and no land rights. They remained stateless until independence in 1980.

Life under the two colonial powers with two different agendas was difficult. The French wished to annex and rule, while the British wished to prepare the natives to rule themselves. In 1979, a government of national unity was formed. On July 30, 1980, independence was declared, and a parliamentary democracy was installed. Walter Lini, a ni-Vanuatu Anglican priest, was the founding prime minister and served until 1991. The country was renamed Vanuatu, which literally means “country that stands up.” The motto “In God we stand” was soon adopted.



New Hebrides bell

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Economy

Vanuatu's temperate climate and arable land makes it ideal for growing food and raising cattle. In an agriculture-based economy, people depend on subsistence crops for their livelihood. The traditional practice of conservation of the land and sea allows certain areas to be used for fishing, gardening, and hunting, leaving other areas idle either for regeneration or reproduction. This ensures there is always ample food for community consumption.

Yams, bananas, taro, kumara, cassava fruits, and nuts are organically grown. Coconuts, coffee, sandalwood, white wood, cocoa and kava are also grown to provide livelihoods. The coconut tree is viewed as the tree of life because all of its parts are useful.

Vanuatu's more recent economic growth is based on tourism, construction, and offshore financial services. Tourism and its related service sectors account for 40 percent of the gross domestic product and one third of people in formal employment. The government remains the largest employer. Big hotels and resorts are owned by foreigners and these proceeds primarily leave



Inside a shop in Port Vila

the country. Vanuatu is a tax haven that earns income from company registrations, fees, and an offshore shipping registry.

There are minor income earning activities such as *nanggol* (land diving) and the traditional weaving of mats and baskets. Women make and sell clothes at the marketplaces to earn money to help support their families.

The government introduced the regional seasonal employment scheme in partnership with the governments of Australia and New Zealand. This provides short-term, skill-based employment with a short-term visa, allowing people from Vanuatu to work in the agriculture industry in those countries.

Agricultural products contribute only five to nine percent of the gross domestic product; this mostly consists of beef, copra, cocoa, coffee, timber and kava for export. Vanuatu's major trade partners are Australia, Japan, France, New Zealand, and New Caledonia.



A woman tends her chickens.

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Social security

The traditional ni-Vanuatu family has a built-in social security system, ensuring a place for everyone, as people work on their own land, grow their own food, and make their own items for trade or for use in the home. They share and help each other; they care for their old and young.

However, the number of nuclear families is growing, creating a gap between the haves and the have-nots. People leave the islands, hoping to find jobs in the towns, only to discover there are no jobs or they lack the necessary qualifications to obtain one. Soon, they find themselves without food, water, or proper housing.

With the introduction of cash crops and cattle, most arable land is used for these purposes rather than food crops, leading to malnutrition. Although there is land available for agricultural development, careers in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are not encouraged by the education system as much as are white-collar jobs, resulting in a lack of skilled workers in these important fields.



Traditional village house

Arts and entertainment

Like many Pacific Islanders, the people of Vanuatu love music and dancing. Traditional instruments, such as carved slit gongs, slit bamboo beaten with a stick, bamboo flutes, and seed rattlers, are used to create a rhythmic sound, along with voices, clapping hands, and stamping feet. There are modern bands as well as local string bands for both males and females. Vanuatu has many dances, some of which are specific to men or women.

The people of Vanuatu create sand drawings, play string games, and surf. Some adult games are only played during moonlit nights, and there is storytelling detailing the origins of people and stories of animals.

Nanggol (land diving) is practiced by males to display their prowess and to appease the gods, ensuring abundant crops on the farms. Nanggol attracts a large number of tourists, including the queen of England. The frame and vines for the nanggol structure are carefully selected by experienced jumpers, and a traditional healer stays on site in case of accidents.

Children have their own games and dances that teach them morals, counting, directions, and numbers. In contemporary Vanuatu, people enjoy sports such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, and boxing.



Land-diving tower

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Education

The New Hebrides Condominium created a double school system, one in English and another in French. In the first three years of school, children in the towns learn Bislama, while children in the rural areas learn their own local language.

Primary education is not free or compulsory. The government assists by subsidizing tuition fees until Year Six, so that more children have access to education. Many children in rural areas walk long distances to go to school; some even have to leave home and attend boarding school at a very young age.

Secondary education is only accessible for those who can afford it. Most families can only afford to educate their firstborn child. If the firstborn is a girl, it's likely the educational opportunity will be given to the eldest boy.

Child health and malnutrition

Since Vanuatu ratified its Convention on the Rights of a Child in 1992, women's reproductive and children's health have been key national priorities of the government. Reproductive and children's health are defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. However, Vanuatu failed to achieve its 2015 Millennium Development Goal to reduce



Torlie school

maternal and infant mortality. Most deaths in children under five are due to malnutrition and the increase in stunted growth among children is likely linked to inadequate nutrition.

It is estimated that 75 percent of the population lives in rural areas with inadequate transportation and communication, fewer qualified healthcare givers, fewer human resources, and underfunded health facilities. A major health issue for women, besides reproductive health and maternal mortality, is breast and cervical cancer, since screening and treatment are limited.

Vanuatu's estimated population growth is one of the highest in the Pacific Region. The high fertility rate places a considerable economic burden on people's livelihoods. Because it is a male-dominated society, certain attitudes have an adverse impact on reproductive and child healthcare choices and behaviors. The promotion of family planning and service delivery are needed.

Children suffering from malnutrition do not recover easily from childhood illnesses, such as diarrhea, pneumonia, or other contracted diseases. Evidence-based interventions are needed to reduce the

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maternal, newborn, and child morbidity and mortality rates. These interventions include access to services that provide antenatal care, postnatal care, skilled birth attendance, early essential care, and emergency obstetric and newborn care. It is important to educate mothers about early and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, micronutrient supplementation, deworming, immunization, and prevention and management of childhood illness and malnutrition.

Malnutrition is a concern in both rural and urban areas. Vanuatu's traditional diet is high in carbohydrates and low in protein, and the introduction of processed, western foods has further impacted the well-being of children.

Water and sanitation

Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities is a major concern in Vanuatu. The population has poor water sources, such as unprotected wells, springs, and surface water. While places like Port Vila and Luganville have water infrastructures, access to safe water is still in the developmental stages in small villages, leaving them vulnerable to drought and natural disasters. Many water sources are far from homes and take 30 minutes to an hour to reach.



Water well

Sanitation facilities still need a lot of improvements in order for society to combat health issues.

Youth

Young people ages 12 through 30 make up about one third of Vanuatu's population. Data show an increase in movement from rural to urban areas. Young people are migrating to Luganville and Port Vila for better education, training, and employment opportunities. The main activity for most young people is producing goods for community consumption, which is unpaid for 1 in 20 youths.

While 16 percent of young people ages 15 through 29 in urban areas have some access to the internet, this number drops to three percent for the same age group in rural areas. Most youth in rural areas only have access to mobile phones and a radio.

By age 17, three percent of girls are legally married and by 30, that number increases to nearly two thirds. For men, 93 percent are still unmarried at age 19 and by 30 more than half are married.

Women

In the past 20 years, the gender gap in literacy and education in Vanuatu has narrowed. In some provinces, girls outperform boys in school attendance.

Since independence was declared in 1980, only five women have been elected to the national Parliament. Recent reports indicate that women represent just three percent of senior/executive government positions. More often than not, women are excluded from decision-making and are absent from leadership positions.

Women represent 40 percent of the labor force in both public and private sectors, compared to 60 percent of men. Women are typically full-time homemakers, caring for children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other family members. Because of this, women remain more susceptible to hazards of poverty, climate change, natural disasters, and other livelihood stresses.

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Port Vila market

The opportunity for women to set up businesses is limited, since they lack access to capital, financial services, and markets. This is particularly the case for rural women. Despite these discriminatory issues, women are participating in the business sector in their own ways. Many earn their living selling clothes, vegetables, and fruits at the market.

There are more female-headed, single-parent households with children, grandchildren, or extended family members compared to male-headed households. Even though much of the burden of household chores rests upon women, their life expectancy is higher than that of men.

Gender-based violence is a serious issue affecting women and girls. Approximately 60 percent of women in Vanuatu have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence in their lives and 21 percent of these women were left with permanent injuries. The Family Protection Act is the legal framework that protects and supports women in cases of domestic violence.

In the current parliamentary democracy in Vanuatu, there are provisions in the Constitution for gender equity/equality, but no political will to implement it. From a Christian perspective, the Bible depicts male and female as partners (Genesis 1:26), but religious

institutions are not doing their part to encourage women to use their potential.

World Day of Prayer

World Day of Prayer (WDP) was introduced in Vanuatu by Canadian missionaries Amy Skinner and Catherine Ritchie. Leimaku Sokomanu was the preacher for the first World Day of Prayer service in Vanuatu, held on March 8, 1946, in the Presbyterian Paton Memorial Church in Port Vila. An offering of 15 pounds was collected, divided, and distributed—nine pounds to refugees in China, three pounds to refugees in Australia, and three pounds put into an account for the local work of Presbyterian Women’s Mission Union. The first elected committee members for World Day of Prayer were Mrs. Touali (president) and Salmone Bakokoto (secretary).

On the invitation of the Presbyterians, Anglicans and Catholics joined Vanuatu’s World Day of Prayer committee in 1981. Women from Apostolic and Church of Christ congregations remember joining together as young women in the 1980s on the islands of Ambae and Pentecost. In later years, other denominations across the islands joined World Day of Prayer.

With the creation of the Women’s Desk of the Vanuatu Christian Council, in the early 2000s, collaborations were developed with WDP groups already in existence. The World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC) held a workshop in Vanuatu in 2011 to strengthen the connection between the groups. The Vanuatu Committee was recently reorganized and nominated Apostolic Church pastor Pollyana Banga as president and Audrey Luen, from the Vanuatu Christian Council, as liaison to WDPIC. The other members are Helen Kofana (Church of Christ), vice president; Cindy Vanuaroro (Presbyterian), secretary; Loleth Worwor (Seven Day Adventist), vice secretary; Helen Waren (Anglican), treasurer; Celene Telukluk (Anglican), vice treasurer; and members Sarah

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WDP Vanuatu Committee

Oriva Sam (Catholic), Roslyn Keleb, and Jenny Taviti (Presbyterians).

The Vanuatu Committee wishes to develop initiatives to assist young, rural women by creating employment and educational opportunities. They also wish to help with health programs focusing on maternal concerns, children's health, and cancer. Most of all, the Committee prays that the program they wrote for the 2021 World Day of Prayer will carry the voices of Vanuatu women across the world.

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Bible Study

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Prepared by the WDP

Committee of Vanuatu



Build on a Strong Foundation Matthew 7:24–27*

Introduction

The Gospel according to Matthew was written for a Christian community of Jewish descent. Matthew’s design was to present Jesus as the King of the Jews, the long-awaited Messiah. The structure of the book of Matthew may be outlined as follows: the presentation of Jesus the Messiah (1:1–4:11), the teaching of Jesus (4:12–7:29), the healing power of Jesus (8:1–11:1), the progressive rejection of the King (11:2–16:12), the preparation of Jesus’ disciples (16:13–20:28), the presentation and rejection of the Messiah (20:29–27:66); and the resurrection of Jesus (28:1–20).

The main Bible text for this year’s World Day of Prayer is based on the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 7:24–27, specifically his instructions for entering the kingdom of heaven. For a broader context, read Matthew 5:1–7:28.

A review of Matthew 7

Jesus makes a comparative analysis of a specific situation. He begins with instructions not to judge others, because we will be judged according to how we judge (1–2). Jesus then advises us to notice our own actions and correct them, before pointing out the faults of others (3–6).

In verses 7–11, Jesus talks about God as the source of all good things, who will give to those who ask in faith. Verse 12 is the “golden rule,” a summary of the law and the teachings of the prophets—“do to others as you would have them do to you” (NRSV). In verses 13–14, Jesus teaches about two ways of life.

In verses 15–20, Jesus instructs about false and true teaching and how to identify and deal with these teachings. In verses 21–23, Jesus teaches about the way into the kingdom of God; only persons who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Verses 24–27 are the focus of this year’s World Day of Prayer program. The end of Chapter 7 concludes what was started in Chapter 5, the Sermon on the Mount. This is important context as we read what Jesus says about his words, how they should be heard and acted on (v. 24). It is not an empty instruction; behind it is the full understanding of Jesus’ ministry and the kingdom of heaven. Let’s recall Jesus’ words (5:1–11) calling us to act as wise witnesses of God’s blessings.



Bible Study

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Prepared by the WDP



Committee of Vanuatu

Read Matthew 7:24–27

Group exercise

Before reading the text, you may choose to print and cut apart sentences of scripture. **Note:** Be sure to remove the verse numbers. Ask participants to put the story in the sequence they think corresponds to what Jesus taught. Let people share the sequence created and discuss new insights the exercise may have brought in understanding this story.

Conclude the exercise by asking volunteers to read Matthew 7:24–27 and discuss the following questions:

1. Jesus used two verbs to emphasize his message: hear and act (vv. 24 and 26). How do these verbs make you feel? What other scripture do they remind you of?
2. In your context, what makes someone wise? What makes someone foolish?
3. Imagine you were part of the crowd when Jesus gave these instructions. How would you have reacted?

Jesus' concern for the crowd that gathered to hear him speak was teaching them about God and how to live better lives. All of Jesus' teachings in Matthew 7 focused on two things—hearing and acting, listening and doing. Jesus concluded his teaching with a story comparing the wise and foolish builders. The wise one heard and acted on Jesus' words, while the foolish one did not. This is our challenge and inspiration as we make our own decisions in life.

Connect the Bible story with the theme

The essence of this scripture passage is to hear the word of God and act accordingly. When we build on the rock, which is Christ, we are building a strong foundation that will stand the tests of life and remain solid and secure.

Proverbs 24:3 says, “By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established.” This is the house of

one who is wise, who hears and acts on the word of love and builds the house on a secure and strong foundation—Jesus Christ.

Let us rise and build our homes, our nations, and the world on the words of Jesus, who reminds us about the golden rule (Matt. 7:12). This is our solid foundation. This is our focus and it is the central teaching of Jesus in Matthew 7.

As women and leaders in life, we must rise up against all forms of violence to build a new society that is more just, peaceful, and God-focused. With God all things are possible. Let us be united in this belief.

Closing questions

1. As we reflect on this scripture reading, what lessons have we learned?
2. What are the words of Jesus that inspire you to live wisely?
3. How do you wisely turn prayers into action in your context?

Prayer

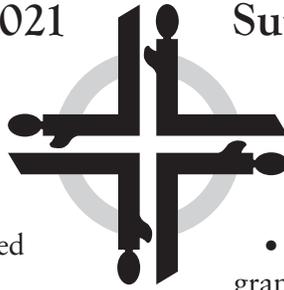
God, let us remember that in life there are always choices to make. We invite you to intervene in our lives and help us act on the words of Jesus, who we claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.

* Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Communication and Promotion Ideas

World Day of Prayer 2021

Supplemental Material



Take time to read the entire leader's guide and the worship service before you begin. Reach out to other churches in your town, city, or region to see whether they are interested in collaborating on an ecumenical service.

Ideas

- Visit pastors in each of your community's churches to tell them about World Day of Prayer; bring WDP materials with you. Get the name of the women's group leader or anyone interested in planning.
- Distribute copies of the children's service and activities to Christian education directors for use in their curricula. Download the service and activities free at www.wdp-usa.org.
- Post bulletins, posters, and other fliers in churches and public buildings in your community. Order WDP postcards and send them as invitations.
- Use the public service announcement available as a separate download and included in the supplement.
- Contact local media (radio, television, newspapers) with notifications and articles. Ask for the religion or local/regional editor.
- Ask your local radio or cable station to have you as a guest on any religious or community programs prior to WDP.
- Use the press release found in the supplement (editable Word document available as a free download). If you send the announcement by email, include it as part of your note rather than as an attachment, so the information is not lost.
- Provide a shorter version of the press release to church or women's group newsletter editors. Email them a copy of the bulletin insert (free download at wdp-usa.org) for more information.
- Provide a shorter version of the press release for upload to websites accessible to you. Check with church secretaries, newsletter editors, and others who manage or access websites.
- Send an informational email "blast" to everyone in your electronic address book.
- Make your WDP service a Facebook event and invite your Facebook contacts. Post regularly to Facebook

about your preparations for WDP, and link to the WDP Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WorldDayOfPrayerUSA.

- You may also want to use Twitter and Instagram accounts to publicize your WDP service.
- Include graphics and maps in your information. Download the WDP logo from www.wdp-usa.org.
- Ask librarians at local libraries to display adult and children's books about Vanuatu in the months prior to WDP.
- Visit www.wdp-usa.org for articles and blog entries about Vanuatu and the service's themes. Print these articles and post them on bulletin boards or email them to your contacts.
- Include a reminder about WDP in your Christmas cards and letters.
- Invite a college, young adult, or youth group to participate in planning with you, or to plan their own service.
- Invite members of immigrant communities to join you. Locate individuals from Vanuatu in your community and invite them to participate.
- Offer to lead the WDP Bible study for women's groups, adult education, and Sunday school classes in your church and other local churches. The Bible study can be downloaded for free at www.wdp-usa.org.

Necessities

- At all services, be sure to acknowledge the presence of special groups and churches by names, particularly the host church.
- Immediately following the service, make certain that the offering and evaluation form are sent to
World Day of Prayer USA
475 Riverside Drive, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10115
- Get the name of the host church and contact person for the next year.
- Collect email addresses and updated contact information from anyone who wants to receive communications and e-newsletters from WDP USA, and send it in with your report form.

Public Service Announcement and Press Release

World Day of Prayer 2021 Supplemental Material

Public Service Announcement (30 sec.)

(Also available as a Word document at www.wdp-usa.org.)

Contact _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

Friday, March 5, is World Day of Prayer 2021. World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical celebration of informed prayer and prayerful action. Join in a service written by the women of Vanuatu, who call us to build our homes, our nations, and the world on a strong foundation. The theme is inspired by Matthew 7:24–27. This service is sponsored by [*group*] at [*location*] on [*date*] at [*time*].

* * * * *

Press Release

(Also available as a Word document at www.wdp-usa.org.)

For Immediate Release

Date

Contact Name

Telephone/Email

World Day of Prayer 2021

Women, men, and children in more than 170 countries and regions will celebrate World Day of Prayer, Friday, March 5, 2021. This year, the women of Vanuatu call us to worship with the words “Build on a strong foundation,” inspired by Matthew 7:24–27. We learn about Vanuatu’s history and rich culture, as the women share their stories of wisdom, tradition, and experiences of God’s profound love. We explore the story Jesus tells about the kingdom of heaven being like a house built on solid land. Choosing land on which to build is an important decision for people in Vanuatu. Considering both the terrain and the climate is crucial in a tropical archipelago located in the South Pacific Ocean and prone to earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions and rising sea levels. In Jesus’ story, the wisdom of the builder of the house comes from hearing and acting on the word of God, which is a word of love. This is the foundation on which our sisters call us to build our homes, our nations, and the world. A call of faith to be earnestly considered when responding to the prayer of commitment: “What is the house that you would build?”

This year’s service will be held on [*date and time*] at [*location*]. [Add any specific details about the local WDP celebration. Remember to mention availability of child care and handicap accessibility.]

Invite your friends, family, and communities of faith to join the women of Vanuatu in prayer and song, supporting ecumenical efforts toward justice, peace and healing. The offering helps meet the needs of families in Vanuatu and around the world who are victims of many forms of poverty, violence, and injustice.

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. World Day of Prayer was founded on the idea that prayer and action are inseparable in the service of God’s kingdom. Each year a different country’s committee serves as the writers of the World Day of Prayer worship service. And each year, we are called to action in response to the concerns raised by the writer country.

For more information, contact [*insert local contact information*] or the national office of World Day of Prayer USA (www.wdp-usa.org).

World Day of Prayer • March 5, 2021 “Build on a Strong Foundation”

This year, the women of the World Day of Prayer Committee of Vanuatu call us to worship with the words “Build on a strong foundation,” inspired by Matthew 7:24–27. We are invited to learn about Vanuatu’s history and rich culture. The women share their stories of intergenerational wisdom, traditions, and experiences of God’s profound love.

The WDP 2020 program explores the pas-

sage in which Jesus tells a story about the kingdom of heaven, using the image of a house and the land on which the house is built. Choosing the land on which to build a house is an important decision for people in Vanuatu. Considering both the terrain and the climate is crucial in a tropical archipelago located in the South Pacific Ocean and prone to earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions and rising sea levels.

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WDP’s guiding principles affirm that “prayer is rooted in listening to God and to one another.” Through the worship service, we listen to the people of Vanuatu. They take us to their communities and through their concerns. Their everyday life is woven into their prayers. They invite us to follow prayer with action. WDP’s motto “Informed prayer leads to prayerful action” affirms that prayer and action are inseparable and that both have immeasurable influence. Let us walk in faith and prayerful action!



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About World Day of Prayer

Since the nineteenth century, Christian women in the United States and Canada have initiated cooperative activities in many areas of concern for women and children, recognizing the critical role of prayer in mission work and their call to promote world peace through worldwide mission work. The first organized “day of prayer for the world” was held in Canada on January 9, 1920. The United States soon followed on February 20, 1920.

Now, hundreds of thousands of women (and men, youth, and children) from around the world and in every region gather to collectively worship on the first Friday in March. Each year, a different country serves as the writer of the World Day of Prayer worship service and other materials. Women of that country’s national WDP committee interpret scripture within their cultural context and prepare a worship service; women around the world lead the services.

World Day of Prayer is supported by sacrificial and benevolent mission offerings given by individuals through these annual services. Each of the 170 countries celebrating World Day of Prayer has an ecumenical committee of women representing many cultures, races and faith traditions. Each country’s committee is responsible for determining the use of the offering as it relates to the theme for each year. Offering grants are made to women and children’s groups in each country.

World Day of Prayer USA promotes justice and equality for women through prayer, partnerships, service and celebration. For more information, visit the World Day of Prayer USA website at www.wdp-usa.org.

Contact information

World Day of Prayer USA
475 Riverside Drive, 15th Floor • New York, NY 10115
Orders: 888.937.8720
info@wdp-usa.org www.wdp-usa.org
www.facebook.com/WorldDayOfPrayerUSA



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Food of Vanuatu

World Day of Prayer 2021 • Supplemental Material



The cuisine of Vanuatu, like that of many of the surrounding Pacific Islands, incorporates fish, root vegetables such as taro and yams, and fruits and vegetables. Most families have gardens and grow much of their food. Papayas, pineapple, mangos, plantains and sweet potatoes are plentiful. Coconut milk is a common ingredient in many dishes. Most food is cooked using hot stones or through boiling and steaming; little of the food is fried. Since Vanuatu is one of the few South Pacific regions influenced by the outside world, its food has a multicultural nature. A variety of international food can be found in the larger cities. French, English, Italian, Indian and Chinese cuisines have all had an influence on food in Vanuatu today.

Kava, a traditional psychoactive, non-alcoholic drink, is very popular in Vanuatu. It is consumed for its sedative effects not only in Vanuatu, but throughout the Pacific Ocean cultures of Polynesia. Commonly drunk at dusk, it is consumed mostly by men but also increasingly by women.

The booming tourism industry has contributed to a rise in Western food bars and restaurants that can be found in the nation's urban areas. Dishes like chicken and chips, pizza, fried rice and stir-fried meat dishes, can be found in many restaurants but are considered luxury food for locals.

The national dish of Vanuatu is *laplap*. It is a staple, pudding-like dish made from grated starchy vegetables (manioc, banana, taro, yam, or breadfruit) and coconut cream. Leaves from the banana or heliconia plant are wrapped around the mixture, tied with strands of vine and cooked in a "ground oven" of hot stones. Laplap styles vary from island to island. Local markets frequently have stalls that sell local laplap with various toppings such as chicken, beef, octopus, or fried fish.

Another popular dish is *simboro*. Simboro resembles the Greek dish dolmades. It is a steamed roll of grated

banana, manioc, yam, taro, or wheat flour wrapped in banana leaves and covered in coconut milk.

At the markets, you will also find *tuluk*. This is a traditional food consisting of tapioca (a dried form of cassava or manioc) dough with a shredded pork filling inside. It is wrapped in banana leaves and steamed.

Local specialties found in restaurants of Port Vila include *roussette* (flying fox or fruit bat) and *nautou* (green-winged ground pigeon). Poulet fish is common and delicious. River prawns are delicate, but best of all is Tahitian fish salad: the fish is marinated in lime juice, then sweetened with coconut milk.

Several edible nuts are grown; these include *cut-nuts*, also called narli-nuts or island chestnuts, and *nangae*, an oval, nut-containing fruit that tastes like an almond.

Below are several recipes for traditional Vanuatu food. Since these can be challenging, and traditional ingredients difficult to find, we have also included some recipes that use ingredients common in the Vanuatu cuisine.



Cooking *laplap*

Food of Vanuatu

World Day of Prayer 2021 • Supplemental Material



Banana and Peanut Butter Biscuits

Ingredients

1¼ cup flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
¾ cup baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup butter
½ cup peanut butter
1 cup sugar
¼ cup bananas

Cooking instructions

Mix flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In another dish, mix butter, peanut butter, and sugar until smooth, then add bananas. After mixing both, add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Bake at 350 for about 12 to 15 minutes.

Banana Chicken

Ingredients

4 bananas
1 small pumpkin
1 chicken
2 green onions



1½ teaspoons salt
1 pepper
1 can coconut milk

Cooking instructions

Peel the bananas and cut them into long slices. Place them in the bottom of a saucepan. Put chicken on top. Cut the green onion and put them on top. Peel pumpkin and cut into long squares. Cut pepper. Put pumpkin and pepper on top of chicken. Pour coconut milk on top. Cook for 30 minutes on top of the stove.

Indian Curry

Ingredients

3 tablespoons oil
2 teaspoons curry
1 large onion
2 large tomatoes
6 pieces garlic
2 teaspoons lemon juice
3 teaspoons ginger
1 cup coconut cream
1 hot pepper
Chicken
2 teaspoons salt
peanuts
Optional: pumpkins or potatoes

Cooking instructions

Cut onion, pepper, garlic and ginger. Sauté in some oil. Put salt, pepper and curry in. Cut tomato and add to vegetables along with the coconut cream and lemon juice. Mix everything. Then, add the chicken. Cook until the chicken is done. Top with peanuts. If you add potato or pumpkin, put it in before the meat as those can take a while to cook.

Recipe sources • www.foodnetwork.com • www.foodbycountry.com • http://ndish.com/ • www.healthy-life.narod.ru/wor_ek227.htm

Food of Vanuatu

World Day of Prayer 2021 • Supplemental Material



Meat in a Nutshell

Servings: 2

Ingredients

4 small sweet potatoes
2 spring onions
1 tomato
¾ cup dark green leaves (spinach, kale or chard)
½ cup peanuts, chopped
fish or beef
¼ medium pineapple, chopped
1 coconut

Cooking instructions

Peel and wash the sweet potatoes and cut into small pieces. Wash and chop onions, tomatoes, and dark green leaves. Grate the coconut and save the shell. Prepare coconut cream. Put all vegetables, peanuts, fish or meat, and pineapple inside half shell of coconut. Pour coconut cream over the mixture. Put the other half shell on top and tie tightly. Steam in a pan of water for about 45 minutes or bake in an earth oven. Serve in the shell.

Instant Pot Coconut Chicken

Ingredients

1 onion, chopped
6 cloves garlic, smashed
¼ cup soy sauce
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
1 tablespoon plus ¾ teaspoon sugar
Freshly ground pepper
1½ pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs (halved if large)
4 Persian cucumbers
1 Fresno chile pepper
Kosher salt
1½ cups jasmine rice
¼ cup unsweetened coconut cream

You will need an Instant Pot for this recipe.

Cooking instructions

1. Combine the onion, garlic, soy sauce, 1/4 cup each vinegar and water, 1 tablespoon sugar and 1/2 teaspoon pepper in an Instant Pot. Stir in the chicken. Close the lid and turn the valve to the sealing position. Set the pot to cook on high pressure for eight minutes.
2. Meanwhile, slice the cucumbers and finely chop the Fresno chile (remove seeds for less heat). Toss the cucumbers and chile with the remaining two tablespoons vinegar and 3/4 teaspoon sugar in a medium bowl. Season generously with salt and let marinate while you finish the dish.
3. Cook the rice as the label directs.
4. When the time is up on the Instant Pot, carefully turn the steam valve to the venting position and manually release the pressure. Open the lid. Change the cooker to the high sauté setting and simmer until the sauce thickens slightly, 12 to 15 minutes.
5. Stir the coconut cream into the chicken mixture. Divide the rice, chicken, and cucumber salad among bowls.

Fried Pumpkin

Ingredients

Small pumpkin
1 cup flour
1 egg
Spring onion
Oil

Cooking instructions

Boil the pumpkin until soft. Mash the pumpkin. Add flour, egg, mix in a small amount of water and spring onion. It should be moist enough to form small patties, but not too sticky. After, fry on both sides like you are making a pancake or potato pancakes.



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For further information, contact

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