World Day of Prayer 2021

Focus on Vanuatu

**Build on a Strong Foundation**

Shortened Version

**PREPERATION:**

Provide a garland necklace known as a salu salu (saloo saloo) for the three voices from Vanuatu. The three leaders and two readers may wear red, green and yellow coloured scarves or ribbons.

Prepare a table for symbols and objects to be placed on, including a candle, the Bible and the flag of Vanuatu; and display a banner with the theme ‘Build on a Strong Foundation’. Also gather crafts and food common to Vanuatu, for example: sandalwood oil, baskets, beads, shell necklaces and root vegetables.

**WELCOME:**

**Leader 1:** Welcome to the 2021 World Day of Prayer service, prepared by the 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.

**Reader 1:** Just over 1,100 miles to the east of Australia in the southwestern Pacific Ocean are the scattered islands of Vanuatu. This cluster of islands, stretching for about 400 miles, form a Y shape on the maps and charts. Discovered in 1606 by the Spanish followed by the French in 1768, and Captain James Cook in 1774. Cook mapped the island group and named it the New Hebrides. The official languages are Bislama, English and French.

Vanuatu is one of the first countries to start to pray on the Day of Prayer, helping to set off the wave of prayer.

Today we share in the prayers that these confident and purposeful women have written and pray also for the needs of Vanuatu.

**SONG: 804/500 How Firm a Foundation**

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,

Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!

What more can he say than to you he hath said,

To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled:

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,

For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid!

I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand

Upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,

My grace all-sufficient shall by thy supply;

The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design

Thy dross to consume and they gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,

I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;

That soul, though all Hell should endeavour to shake,

I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.

**Leader 1:** Let us hear 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.’ (Psalm 127:1)

**All: Happy is everyone who trusts God the house builder. Amen**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**Leader 2:** Let us be thankful for the great things God has done.

**Reader 2:** 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 from the beginning to today. Loving God, on whom Vanuatu stands, we adore you.

**Leader 2:** Thank you for the fellowship with each other and our sisters around the world. Thank you for the fertile lands, for the fresh air, clan environment, beautiful sunshine, blue seas and still waters of the Vanuatu islands

**Reader 2:** Thank you for the sound of children singing, laughing and shouting, and for the prayers and songs of the old and the young which manifest the joy of your love.

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

**PRAYER OF COMMITMENT**

**Leader 3:** God is looking for a house to live in: ‘What is the house that you would build for me?’. (Isaiah 66:1)

**Reader 3:** We come humbly before you and pray that you will grant us your Spirit of wisdom and knowledge. Trusting in you, we know we can change. Help us to build our lives on your foundation.

We humbly offer ourselves to be a house that you can dwell in. By the power of your word, transform our lives and our nations. Make us like a household

**All: Gracious God, accept our commitment.**

**SONG: 815/70 Help Us to Help Each Other Lord**

Help us to help each other, Lord,

Each other’s cross to bear;

Let each his friendly aid afford

And feel His brother’s care

Help us to build each other up,

Our little stock improve;

Increase our faith, confirm our hope,

And perfect us in love.

Up into thee, our living head,

Let us in all things grow,

Till thou hast made us free indeed

And spotless here below.

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 7:24-27

**Devotional Message**

**PRAYERS FOR VANUATU AND THE WORLD**

**Leader 1:** 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 our families and our nations. We commit the leaders and people of Vanuatu into your wise hands.

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.

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

**Leader 2:** We pray foryoung women in Vanuatu who search for work and meaning, especially those who, hoping for a better life, move to the towns and cities, away from family and friends.

We pray for the children of Vanuatu who do not have the opportunity to attend school, and for those on the streets who feel unloved and unwanted. May they find safe shelter and nourishment in their communities and in the embrace of God.

**Leader 3:** We remember people living in places prone to natural disasters.

**Leader 2:** We pray for the Christian community in Vanuatu, that they may extend God’s justice and love to everyone.

**Leader 3:** May they be a living example of a community build on the strong foundation of Christ.

**All: Lord hear our prayers today. AMEN**

**SONG: 662/446**

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness,

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,

But wholly lean on Jesus’ name

*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand,*

*All other ground is sinking sand.*

When darkness seems to veil his face

I rest on his unchanging grace;

In every high and stormy gale

My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, his covenant and blood

Support me in the ‘whelming flood.

When all around my soul gives way

He then is all my hope and stay.

**Leader 1:** God the house builder uses each one of us as a stone to build a strong foundation of love. Let us commit to spreading the love of God wherever we can.

**All: Jesus’ word is our strong foundation. We will follow Jesus – the Way, the Truth and the Life. AMEN**