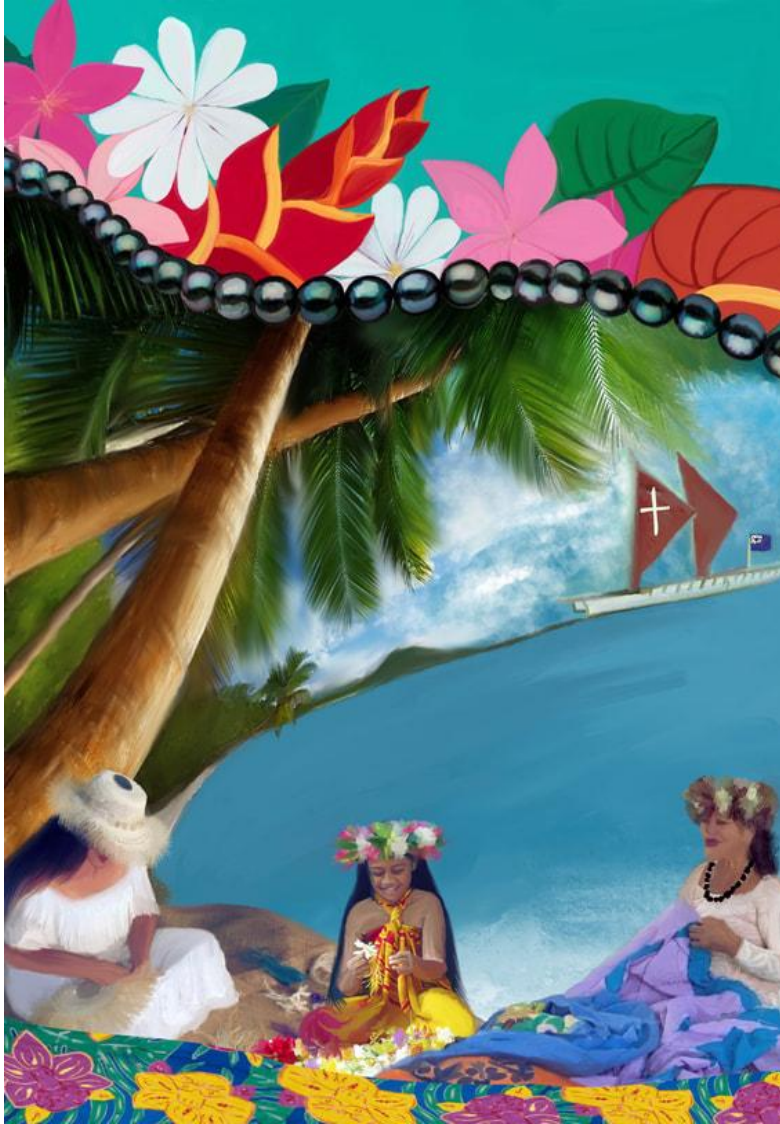


World Day of Prayer | March 7, 2025

“I Made You Wonderful” Psalm 139:14



The 2025 WDP program invites us into the knowledge that each one of us was made with care and love by God. When we can receive this profound truth, everything in our life changes and we begin to radiate and shine from within. We also learn how to treat every other person as made wonderful by God.

Too often, women and girls have been silenced and oppressed, making this upcoming theme from WDP Cook Islands particularly relevant. The message that we, as women and girls, are “fearfully and wonderfully” made in the image of God reinforces our movement’s support of women in expressing their faith and speaking about their lives in prayer and worship before God and in community.

The Worship Service invites us to notice aspects of our divinely created bodies that we often take for granted. The Bible Study prompts dialogue around Psalm 139, particularly focusing on the relationship between God and each one of us.

The Children’s Program includes a song that is popular among children in the Cook Islands, as well as several activities for coloring and creating neck garlands and flower head crowns.

The Country Background gives an abundance of information about the history of the Cook Islands, with a particular emphasis on the achievements of women.

Bible Study

*“For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.”*

The third section of this Psalm focuses on how we are “fearfully and wonderfully” made by God. This resonates with Genesis 1 and 2, where we see God’s creative acts, and learn that human beings are made in the image of God. God called the creation “very good” in Genesis, which resonates with the word “wonderful” in this Psalm.

A new insight into God creating us as human beings shows up in the Psalm with the word “fearfully.” The Hebrew word is “yare,” which can be translated as “to be afraid,” but it also means “to stand in awe and reverence.” We learn that God created and breathed life into us with great honor and respect.

In this part of the Psalm, the psalmist is profoundly moved to give praise and thanksgiving to God.

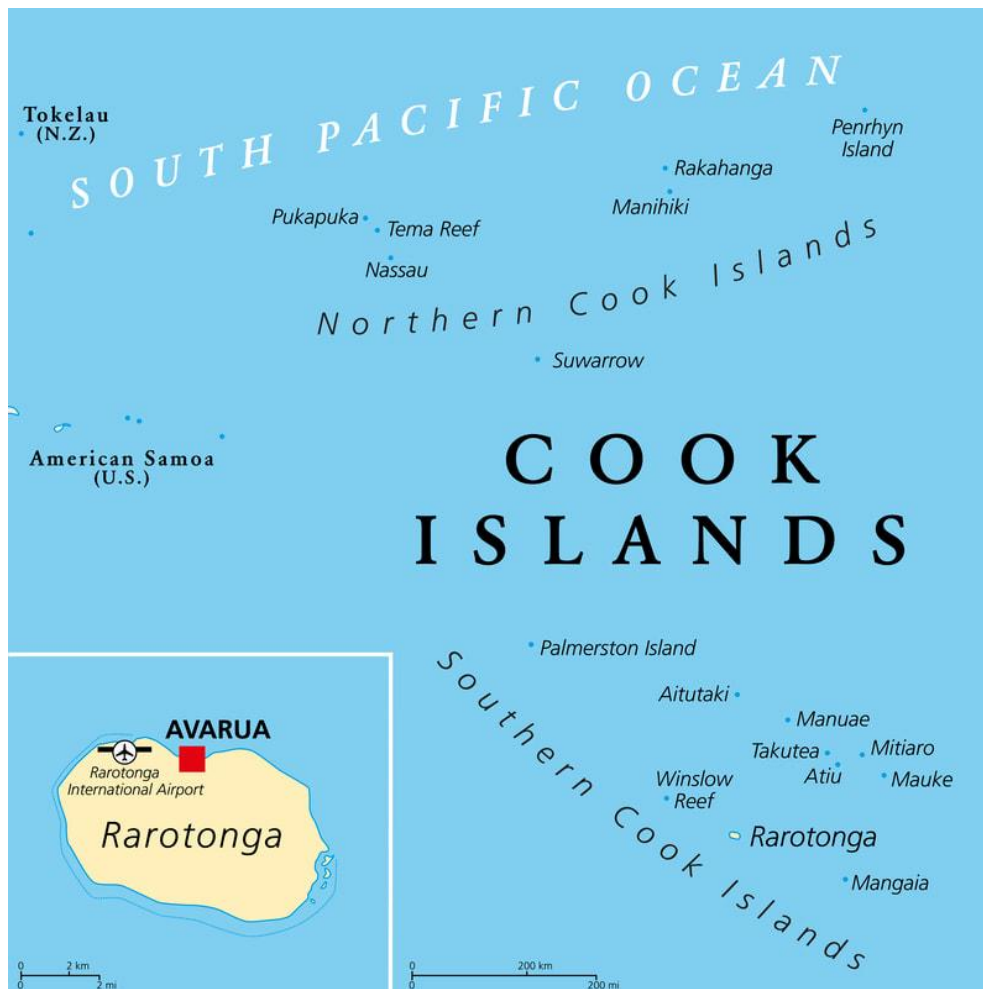
"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

History & Culture

The Cook Islands consist of 15 islands scattered over 2 million square kilometers within the Pacific Ocean. Out of the 15 islands, 12 are inhabited. The capital of the Cook Islands is Rarotonga, a volcanic island with a population of 10,040 (of 15,040 total people). Many Cook Islanders now live abroad in New Zealand and Australia.

The 15 islands that are now called Cook Islands were first thought to have been inhabited between 500-800 A.D., by people from islands in what is now known as French Polynesia.

The British explorer, Captain James Cook came to the islands in his expeditions of 1773 and 1777. Despite the islands eventually carrying the great navigator's namesake, Captain Cook only went ashore on the then uninhabited island of Palmerston. Captain Cook had named the group the Hervey Islands, after a British Lord of the Admiralty, but they were renamed Cook Islands, in honor of the great explorer, some 50 years later by the Russian cartographer, Admiral Adam Johann von Krusenstern.



Today, the Cook Islands is a majority Christian nation, where the people are driven by a strong sense of community and cultural values that come from their belief in God.

The Cook Islands are in an enviable position where most people own and live off the riches of their own land. Cook Islanders are proud to be wonderful caretakers of their family tribal land. The “land tenure system” was established through the Cook Islands Act of 1915, which stipulated that native land could not be bought or sold, except to the government for public purposes. Instead, all native land would be passed to the children of Cook Islanders.

Cook Islanders are crafty. Pandanus (screwpine) and rito (coconut leaf fiber) are the main natural fibers that women in the Cook Islands use for weaving. Pandanus is used to weave mats, baskets, hats, fans, and table mats. Ei katu is a garland of flowers worn around the head. It is worn by both females and males as a symbol of love and belonging. It is a circle, which means that everything is connected.



About the Art & Artist

Tarani Napa and Tevairangi Napa are a Mother-Daughter artist team from the Cook Islands. They feel honored to have been able to share this piece of artwork, “Wonderfully Made”, in recognition of their love for their home, their faith and, and their heritage. Tarani Napa is a mother of six children and three grandchildren. She is a certified primary school teacher, entrepreneur and creative artist. Tevairangi Napa is the eldest daughter of Tarani, and she is a proud mum of two children. She follows in her mother’s footsteps as a creative artist.

From the artists: The lagoons and oceans are bountiful with sea life, fish and gems (like black pearls), which link us to the world. On each island, the mighty coconut tree stands tall, a symbol of strength and goodness. The coconut tree provides for our health and well-being. Our precious Tivaevae quilts represent patience, love and unity. We honor God’s love and mercy with hats we wear to church, woven by skillful loving hands from the strands of rito, the young coconut leaf. We adorn ourselves with sweet scented Tiare tropical flowers, made into crowns and garlands. We are grateful for the arrival of Christianity to our shores 200 years ago. Christianity brought hope, peace and light, with an understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



VIDEOS:

<https://youtu.be/ZxiWitGCjbl>

<https://youtu.be/RaoAKafFHVQ>