



World Day of Prayer

Ecumenical Service, Friday 7 March 2025



“I Made You Wonderfully”

*A service prepared by the WDP Committee of Cook Islands
Adapted for use in New Zealand by World Day of Prayer Aotearoa New Zealand*

“Wonderfully Made” By Tarani Napa and Tevairangi Napa

“I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...” Psalm 139:14

Our Heavenly Father blessed our islands of the sea. From the northern islands across the ocean to the southern islands, the golden sun shines through the clear blue skies and birds freely fly. From the bright white sandy shores all the way to the highest mountain top, our islands are abundant with fresh produce and colorful flora and fauna. 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. We have discovered how to use every part, from the fronds to the very deep roots. For food, drink, medicine, shelter and much more. The coconut tree is essential to our survival, and is the tree of life for our people.

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. In time, our cultures have interwoven with Christianity, and the blessings are evident today. As guardians and caretakers of God’s marvellous works, we always treasure these words, “I made you wonderfully.”

Our women play a vital role in keeping our heritage and traditions alive. They are the keepers of talents, teachers and mentors. From mothers to daughters, the cycle of life, faith and love continues here on our islands of paradise. We show our respect and love for God and for one another in harmonies of song and prayer. Our precious Tivaevae quilts represent patience, love and unity. We honour 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. From the heart, we teach and nurture our beloved children, the younger generation, our future.

At the closing of a gathering, our Tongareva elders always say these powerful words of encouragement -

“Kia mau te serenga! Kia mau te napena! Kia mau!”

About the artists:

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 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.





World Day of Prayer

Prepared by the WDP Committee Cook Islands

Friday 7th March 2025

“I Made You Wonderfully”

Worship Service

INTENTION

This programme invites us to recognize that God created each one of us with great attention and loving care. God knows us intimately, and we are special to God in our uniqueness. When we open the doors of our hearts to this truth, everything in our life changes. We glow from within, and we begin treating others as beloved children of God. Through this liturgy, we hope people will be spiritually uplifted as they come to trust the great love of God.

SPEAKING ROLES

Leader 1

Leader 2

Leader 3

Scripture Reader

Woman 1 – 15 years (or teenager)

Woman 2 – In her 60's

Woman 3 – Middle-aged Doctor

PREPARATIONS – Gather the following symbols:

Flowers

Fill the altar space with brightly coloured and diverse flowers. All those who are leading during the service can wear flower leis and/or *'ei katu* (flower crown or head garland). Have a single flower available for each person who comes to the service. *Tiare Maori* is the National Flower of the Cook Islands and can be used if available. Other flowers common in the Cook Islands include hibiscus, chrysanthemums, and plumeria.

Flowers are an integral part of Cook Islands identity, symbolizing love, friendship and respect. People frequently wear flower crowns and leis, and flowers often appear on Cook Islands fabrics, art, clothing and quilts (tivaevae).

Blue fabric, bowl of water, shells

Use blue fabric, a bowl of water, and shells on the altar space to evoke the ocean.

The ocean is a defining feature of life in the Cook Islands. The ocean is life. It is a source of food, livelihood, and a means of travel. The ocean connects people and communities.

Coconut tree leaves or fruit

Include a photograph or drawing of a coconut tree. If coconut leaves or fruit are available, these can also be used on the altar space.

The coconut tree is referred to as the “tree of life” in the Cook Islands, because every part of the tree is useful. It provides food, drink, medicine, handicrafts, and building materials.

Canoe

Include a canoe (or picture of a canoe) on the altar space.

The canoe is the traditional means of travel for Cook Islanders. This symbol represents the God-given ingenuity of our Polynesian ancestors who created the canoe.

Bible

Include a Bible on the altar space, opened to Psalm 139:14.

PRELUDE

Have the sound of ocean waves playing as participants arrive (10-15 minutes before the service starts). These ocean waves can be audio or video recordings.

Distribute a flower to each person who enters. Invite them to put the flower behind their ear or wear it as a lapel.

WELCOME CHANT

Leaders 1, 2 and 3 stand together in the front of the congregation as the service begins.

If available, Musicians lead the welcome chant.

Turoū, turoū!
Oro mai, oro mai!
E te ao nei!
Iēkoko!

Welcome, welcome!
Come all, come all!
The whole world!
Iēkoko!

WELCOME AND CENTERING

Leader 1: Kia orana!

Today's worship service comes to us from a group of ecumenical Christian women from the Cook Islands in the Pacific. Kia orana is a phrase in the Maori language that Cook Islanders use to greet each other. Kia orana means more than just hello. It means: May you live long and may you live well. May you shine like the sun. May you dance with the waves.

Our sisters in the Cook Islands have invited the whole world to greet each other today with this Maori phrase. You are welcome to repeat after me:

Kia orana!
Kia orana!

May you live long!
May you live long!

May you live well!
May you live well!

May you shine like the sun!
May you shine like the sun!

May you dance with the waves!
May you dance with the waves!

Leader 2: Kia orana!
 Kia orana!

Take a moment and notice your own breathing. *(pause)*

Notice how your breath comes in and out, like the waves of the sea.
(longer pause)

Every one of us gathered here today is breathing! Isn't that astonishing? All of us share in that gift of life. As surely as the waves of the ocean rise and fall, our breath flows in and out.

Let us go ahead now and make a BIG wave! Take a deep breath.
Engage and feel this sacred and shared gift of life! *(pause)*

Leader 3: Kia orana!
 Kia orana!

Let us take another moment to connect. For this one, you will need your imagination! Imagine the blood flowing through your veins and your arteries. Flowing like rivers. *(pause)*

Just as a river brings nutrients to the shores and the fields of the earth, your blood is bringing nutrients to every organ in your body.
(longer pause)

It is amazing that God created our bodies to work this way? To bring health and life to every organ within? To keep us strong, alive and vibrant, each and every day?

Leader 1: Kia orana!
 Kia orana!

Now, you are invited to find a part of your body that does not hurt too much and try feeling the sensation of your skin dancing through time and space. You might want to wiggle your fingers! Or wiggle your toes! Or perhaps you want to stretch your neck muscles. Maybe you

want to touch the skin on your arm, or your face. Or maybe you want to simply sit still and notice how the chair/pew is supporting you.

As you engage your body, remember being a child, when you took delight at simply moving through the world. *(longer pause)*

Leader 2: God made us wonderfully from the very beginning, weaving us together in our mother's womb.

Leader 3: And the Spirit continues to flow through every moment of every day, helping us to feel the astonishing gift of life.

Leader 1: Every single one of us is unique, and deeply loved by God. Look around! Look at all who are gathered here today - both in this space, and all around the world. Take a moment to look around and appreciate the gift of each other! *(longer pause as people look around at each other)*

SONG OF PRAISE (THEME SONG) –

‘Wonderfully Made’ v.1 – *Composed by Ruru Maeva*

If available, Musicians lead the congregation in singing. Leaders 1, 2, 3 remain standing.

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of three systems of music. The first system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a whole rest on the first staff, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are in Maori and English. The second system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a whole rest on the first staff, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are in Maori and English. The third system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a whole rest on the first staff, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are in Maori and English. The score includes chord symbols (F, C7, F, Bb, F/C, C, F) and a repeat sign at the end.

F

Maori: Na - au i an-ga ia - ku, ta-ka - ke to - ku an-ga-i-a. Va - va-
English: I am fear - ful-ly made, and won - der-ful - ly made. Mar-vel

6 C7 F

ri - a ta - au ra - ve, ku - a ki - te pu to - ku vae - ru - a, a - ka -
ous are your works, that my soul knows ver - y well, and I'll

10 Bb F/C C F

mei - ta - ki au ia - koe.
praise you all my days.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader 2: Let us pray to our Creator.

God who made us wonderfully, thank you for this fellowship of sisters and brothers around the world. As we come together, help us open our hearts to you, and to each other. Quiet our minds from all the worries that preoccupy us. Reconnect us to you, and to each other, so that we all may glow brightly, and radiate your love to the world. Amen.

Let us listen now to God, through the voices of women from the Cook Islands.

If available, Musicians lead the congregation in acapella humming of the theme song melody at a slower tempo. During the humming, Leaders 1, 2, and 3 can sit down, and Woman 1 can stand up.

SCRIPTURE, STORY & SONG

Psalms 139:1-6 (NRSV)

If possible, Scripture Reader speaks either from the back of the congregation or offstage.

A reading from the book of Psalms.

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Story 1: God Knows Us

Woman 1: Kia orana.

My name is Mii. I am 15 years old.

February 2022 was a scary month for me. It was the month that my family first had contact with someone who was Covid-19 positive.

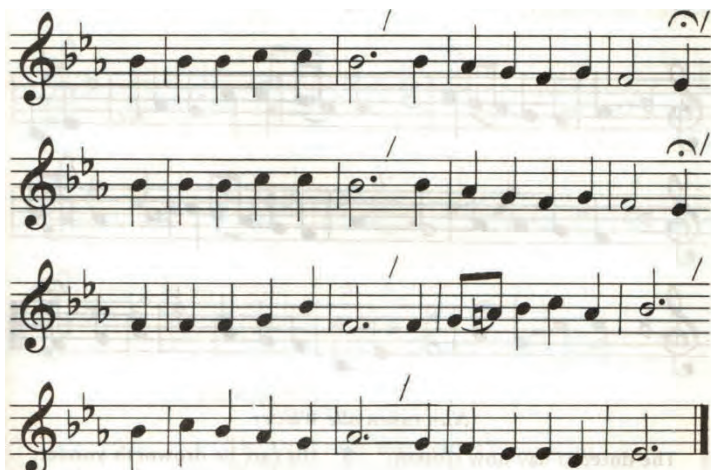
When I first heard about it, I freaked out. My dad felt bad because he was the one who brought it into our home. I was really upset. I thought we were going to die. I knew people who had died from COVID. I thought that I would die and not see my nephew when he was born.

I started to think about things that I haven't experienced yet. I started to pray. I pleaded with God to look after my family. I didn't know what would happen next. I turned to the Lord and asked for guidance. I was terrified and scared, but I knew that prayer would help me to feel calm. And it worked. I stopped crying and the pressure lifted from my heart.

And then I realized that God knows every detail of my life. God knows my distress and fear. God knows. And knowing that God knows and cares about me helps me to feel calm when I am afraid.

God knows me. And God knows you. And God knows everything we are going through.

HYMN: With One Voice – 14 v.1 – Now Thank We All Our God (Martin Rinkart 1586-1649, tr. Catherine Winkworth 1827-78 alt, Later form of melody Johann Cruger 1598-1662)



Now thank we all our God,
with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things hath done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
hast blest us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

Psalms 139:7-12 (NRSV)

If possible, Scripture Reader speaks either from the back of the congregation or offstage.

Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and night wraps itself around me,"
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

Story 2: God is With Us

Woman 2: Kia orana. My name is Vainiu.

I was born in 1958 on the island of Aitutaki. My parents and grandparents believed strongly in the value of culture for a good upbringing. I attended Araura Primary School. For the first 3 years of my education, Cook Islands Maori was the language of instruction.

However, as I moved on in school, it became clear that a lot of importance was placed on the English language. Sadly, the schools that I attended encouraged us to speak English in our classes and in the playground. We were told by our teachers not to speak our mother tongue. We were told to immerse ourselves in the English language. Unfortunately, many at the time believed that English was the universal language, the language of trade, and therefore the language of superiority. The influence by the West in those days was powerful. I struggled with this, as I was fluent in Maori and spoke little English.

My grandmother, Mama Mereana, encouraged her grandchildren to speak Maori. I looked up to Mama Mereana. She had a huge impact on my childhood. She was my mentor and role model in the way of life. It was through her that I learned valuable and lifelong skills of how to plant and prepare food, and to speak the Reo Aitutakian dialect properly. I strongly believe that our elders play a significant role in shaping who we are and where we come from.

The English language has gained momentum over the years and the value of our Maori language has diminished. Formal education during the early years of my life did not have a positive impact on me because what I learned at home from my parents, grandparents and family contradicted what I was taught by my teachers in a Western classroom. The books and lessons that we read and learned from were all in English. I used to think to myself, how are these English books and lessons going to help me plant vegetables, make the umu (ground oven), cook food, wash the clothes and feed the chickens and pigs. A strong feeling of loss led me to withdraw from engaging in the classroom.

One time in school, I remember being caught speaking our indigenous language. My teacher punished me by making me wear a cardboard sign that said, "I am a Maori speaker." She put me on detention and, on a hot day, made me pull out prickly weeds called "pikikaa" on the school playground. I was humiliated and shamed in front of my peers. I never forgot that day. As a result of that experience, I was determined

to speak English and say little about my mother tongue. This is just one example of how my language and culture was devalued.

God gave us unique and special languages throughout the world, and we should honour and respect those languages. I believe that the Maori language needs to be paramount in our teaching and learning environment. Teachers and students can encourage Maori to be spoken, taught and written in all subjects. And parents can give our Maori language a chance to survive by speaking it at home.

During those formative years in my childhood, even though I was devalued and shamed by the school system, I know that God was still with me. Even when we are cast out and treated with disrespect, God is still with us. God goes with us to the darkness at the bottom of the ocean, where there is no light. And God helps lead us out of that darkness into a wonderful light.

Kia orana e kia manuia. Thank you for listening to my story. God bless you.

HYMN: WOV 14 – v,2
O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts,
and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
in this world and the next.

Psalms 139:13-18 (NRSV)

If possible, Scripture Reader speaks either from the back of the congregation or offstage.

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.

Story 3: God Made us Wonderfully

Woman 3: Kia orana. My name is Dr. Dawn

Becoming a doctor was one of the hardest things I have ever done. But it is worth it when a mother shares that her child is now healthy and thriving after I did my part in helping to save that child's life. It truly warms my heart. One time, a girl who had not seen me for over 10 years came up and hugged me, saying I am still her "baby doctor." I enjoy working with children so much. They give me strength to go on serving at a time when the Cook Islands faces the threat of our workforce leaving the country.

I graduated as a doctor in 2003 after 7 years of studying in Fiji. At that time, there was a focus on building up paediatrics in the Cook Islands. I became the first female Cook Islands doctor at the Paediatric Department of the Cook Islands, after my predecessor Dr Henry Daiwo. I would also like to mention Dr. Munro who looked after our paediatric ward previously.

One of my first priorities as a baby doctor was to make sure all babies got a check-up by our team within 24 hours. I also helped us to become more equipped and skilled to handle very sick and premature

newborns. We established guidelines and protocols to help direct our work. We improved the connection between the Cook Islands and our great supporters from Auckland and Starship Hospital in New Zealand. Having more specialised care has been a major factor in improving the health of our children. We pride ourselves on being the only Pacific Island country to have no maternal deaths since 1995.

Other areas of our healthcare system in the Cook Islands have also improved over the decades. Specialised care has greatly improved since the 1990s as the focus moved from infectious diseases to curative medicine. Our screening programmes for cervical and breast cancers have greatly improved. However, there is still work to be done. We must focus on offering better primary health care and preventing noncommunicable diseases and pandemics. We need to focus on mental health. We need to strengthen support systems for our elderly. Our teenage pregnancies still need to be addressed. Although accessibility to contraception is relatively easy, the uptake needs more encouragement. Our communities must act and take accountability for their own health. Health and wellness are a job for everyone. We can only improve if we work together.

God created me wonderfully by blessing me with the motivation and opportunity to study medicine. And I responded to God's blessing by serving the people of the Cook Islands as a doctor. As I have worked in healthcare over the years, I realize more and more that God has made all of us wonderfully. Our bodies, minds and spirits were knit together by our loving Creator. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. We all are fearfully and wonderfully made.

HYMN: WOV 14 – v.3

All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and Holy Ghost,
one Lord in highest heaven:

the one eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Leader 1: As we come to our time of prayer, let us prepare our hearts to come before God. When we pray, we deepen our relationship to God. And when we deepen our relationship to God, we become more connected to all of God's creation. Let us open our hearts and spirits to God.

SONG OF PRAISE

During the singing, Leaders 1, 2 and 3 get into place.

I am fearfully made, and wonderfully made.

Marvellous are your works, that my soul knows very well.

And I'll praise you all my days!

You are fearfully made, and wonderfully made.

Marvellous are God's works, that my soul knows very well.

And I'll praise God all my days!

We are fearfully made, and wonderfully made.

Marvellous are God's works, that we now know very well.

And we'll praise God all our days!

God Who Knows Us – Ruru Maeve

Maori: A - tu - a ki - te ia ma - tou, ki ro - to ia ma - tou,
English: _____ God_ who knows us, God who_ is with us,

5
tei an - ga ia ma - tou, pu - re ma - tou kia - koe.
God_ who made us, to_ you_ we pray.

Leader 1: Magnificent God, we stand in awe of you. We give you glory because of who you are – the Creator of the entire world. You created the beautiful Cook Islands - the fertile lands, the mountains, and the oceans. And you created beauty in every part of the world. You created roosters on the land, and whales in the sea. And you formed us - human beings - fearfully and wonderfully made in your image. All of creation reveals Your majestic glory.

HYMN: With One Voice – 90 – v.1 – Lord You Have Searched Me – John Hatton ?1795 The Psalter Hymnal 1927 alt. Tune Duke Street



Lord, you have searched me, and you know
where'er I rest, where'er I go;
and you know all that I have planned,
and all my ways are in your hand.

Leader 2: Faithful God, thank you for taking care of us in every moment of our lives. You have been with us in our fear and our anxiety. Our depression and our frustration. You have helped us bear financial limitations and uncertainties about the future. You have been present with us through cyclones and tsunamis, wildfires and earthquakes. You held us through the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the physical and mental well-being of so many.

God, thank you for all the women leading our powerful prayer movement. We praise you for the mamas who have passed the World Day of Prayer baton from the past into the present.

God of Abundance, we are truly grateful for you. And we cannot help but praise You for your faithfulness.

HYMN: WOV 90 – v.2

My words from you I cannot hide;
I feel your power on every side;
Such wondrous knowledge, awful might,
Unfathomed depth, unmeasured height!

Leader 3: God of Mercy, we come before you with humble hearts seeking Your forgiveness of our many sins – in word, in deed, and in thoughts. We have spoken unkind words to those around us, neglecting to treat them as wonderfully made by you. We have polluted the oceans and destroyed the environment, neglecting to care for your beautiful creation. Our pride and lack of courage have caused harm to ourselves and others. All of this has caused us to miss out on your blessings and love.

HYMN: WOV 90 – v.3

Where can I fly apart from you?
Where can I from your presence go?
In heaven? It is your dwelling fair:
In death's abode? You still are there.

Leader 1: Gracious God, please hear the longings of our hearts. Re-create your character and image within us. Open our spiritual eyes and minds to accept our divine beauty. And inspire us to share this beauty with others. God, help us to honour the divine beauty in everyone, appreciating each person that you have created. Wise Teacher/Patient God, help us to recognize that you are always present, no matter what circumstances we face. Loving Spirit, we need your embrace, so that we might shine and radiate your love to the whole world.

HYMN: WOV 90 – v.4

If I the wings of morning take,
and far away my dwelling make,
I find your right hand leading me,
Your presence still supporting me.

Leader 2: God of Wisdom, we pray for the leaders in our world.
Guide their hearts and minds to have integrity as they make decisions.
Inspire them and bless them with vision to move our world towards
unity and peace.

We pray for women and girls who are vulnerable in our societies.
Create the conditions so that elderly women can live with respect and
dignity. Give our young women the education, aspiration and vision
to develop into a promising future. Provide strength, courage and
patience to all women experiencing domestic violence.

God of Healing, restore us to wellness. Heal us from physical diseases
such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Relieve us from mental
illness and heal our emotional wounds. Protect us from the selfishness
and greed that threaten our spiritual well-being.

God, help our World Day of Prayer movement unite our communities
in prayer. Help us make your love visible. Strengthen us to continue
loving and supporting all who are in need. Lead us to treat others as
wonderfully made by you, so that all people would feel that they are
important, cared for, and treasured.

HYMN: WOV 90 – v.5

And if the darkness covers me
and light as darkness seems to be,
to you there's neither day nor night:
the darkness is as clear as light.

Leader 3: Now let us continue by singing the Lord's Prayer in Maori, the heart language of our sisters from the Cook Islands. After we sing, we will speak the Lord's Prayer in our own heart languages.

[The Lord's Prayer Sung in Cook Islands Maori](#)

Our Father who art in heaven	<i>E to matou Metua I te Ao ra</i>
Hallowed be Thy Name	<i>Kia Tapu toou ingoa</i>
Thy Kingdom come	<i>Kia tae toou Basileia</i>
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven	<i>Kia akono ia toou anoano I te Enuā nei, mei tei te Ao katoa ana</i>
Give us this day our daily bread	<i>Omai I te kai e tau ia matou I teianeī ra</i>
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us	<i>E akakore mai I tā matou ara Mei ia matou I akakore I tā tetai ara ia matou nei</i>
And lead us not into temptation	<i>Auraka e akaruke ia matou Kia timata'ia mai</i>
but deliver us from evil	<i>E akaora ra ia matou mei te kino</i>
For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory	<i>Noou oki te Basileia E te Mana, e te Kaka</i>
Forever and ever	<i>E tuātau uatu</i>
Amen	<i>Amene</i>

OFFERTORY

Today we have been blessed by the witness of Christian women from the Cook Islands. The three stories they shared have connected us to their lives. These women from the Cook Islands have given generously of their time and talents to make this World Day of Prayer not only possible, but beautiful.

We come now to a time of offering. The World Day of Prayer is a movement led by Christian women that unites the world in prayer. As we pray with our sisters from the Cook Islands, we are moved to

prayerful action. Giving our financial resources is one way we can act so that all women and girls can live with dignity and respect.

[Leader explains how the offering will be used]

Our offerings this year will support:

Christian World Service – Tongan Community Development Fund, and its work with the Amatakiloa women’s groups in Tongan Village communities.

The **Bible Society** – Bible Society of the South Pacific – Healing the wounds of trauma in the South Pacific.

Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy in New Zealand.

Leader 1: While we are giving our offering, let us enjoy this *imeni tuki* – or sacred hymn – by our siblings in the Cook Islands. May we open our hearts and give generously.

A recording of Cook Islanders singing can be played while the offering is taken. Follow this link for Cook Island [Congregation Singing](#)

Leader 1: Let us pray.

God, we dedicate this offering to you. Thank you for all the gifts you have given to us. Bless the gifts we offer now to you, so that they may bless the world. Amen.

A MUTUAL BLESSING

Leader 2: As a second part of our offering, and in response to all that has been shared today, let us take a moment to greet a few people around us.

You can start by saying “Kia orana!” And then you can say something that you love about that person. After you say what you love about the person, you can end by saying “God made you wonderfully!”

If you know the person well, you might say “Kia orana! I love how you treat everyone with kindness and respect! God made you wonderfully!”

Or, “Kia orana! You are the best cook I know! God made you wonderfully!”

Or, “Kia orana! I love how dedicated you are to your kids. God made you wonderfully!”

If you don’t know them very well, you might say “Kia orana! I love your smile! God made you wonderfully!”

Or “Kia orana! I love your shirt! God made you wonderfully!”

So, let’s offer a mutual blessing to each other now.

While people are greeting each other, the instrumentalists can play the theme song in the background.

After a minute or two, sing the theme song. During the theme song, Leaders 1, 2 and 3, and Women 1, 2 and 3 get in place to speak.

Wonderfully Made – Ruru Maeve

Maori: Na - au i an - ga ia - ku, ta - ka - ke to - ku an - ga - i - a. Va - va
English: I am fear - ful - ly made, and won - der - ful - ly made. Mar - vel

6 C⁷ F
ri - a ta - au ra - ve, ku - a ki - te pu to - ku vae - ru - a, a - ka -
ous are your works, that my soul knows ver - y well, and I'll

10 B^b F/C C F
mei - ta - ki au ia - koe.
praise you all my days.

*I am fearfully made, and wonderfully made.
Marvellous are your works, that my soul knows very well.
And I'll praise you all my days!*

*You are fearfully made, and wonderfully made.
Marvellous are God's works, that my soul knows very well.
And I'll praise God all my days!*

*We are fearfully made, and wonderfully made.
Marvellous are God's works, that we now know very well.
And we'll praise God all our days!*

COMMITMENT TO 'PRAYERFUL ACTION'

Leader 1: So what now? What happens when we realize that God is with us and for us? What changes when we recognize that we are fearfully and wonderfully made?

Leader 2: What we believe often becomes our reality. When we think differently, we live differently. Changing the way we think changes the way we act.

Leader 3: Each one of us is God's masterpiece. How will that realization cause us to live differently?

Woman 1: Like Mii, when we realize that God knows us, we can find peace amidst our fears.

Woman 2: Like Vainiu, when we trust that God is always with us, we can find strength even in the midst of struggles.

Woman 3: And like Dr Dawn, when we understand that we are unique and special, made wonderfully by God, we can use our gifts and talents to serve and bless the world.

Leader 1: Our motto in World Day of Prayer is "Informed Prayer, Prayerful Action." So let us take one last moment together. As we listen again to the ocean waves, let us ask how God is calling us into a new way of being in the world – into "prayerful action."

Play recording of the ocean waves for 1-2 minutes.

Hymn: 'Your love, O God is never ending' (Words vv 1,4,5,6: Marty Haugen / 'The day you gave us Lord, has ended.' (Words vv 2,3: John Ellerton 1870. Tune: Clement C Scholefield, 1874)

1. Your love, O God is never ending,
throughout the earth its bounty flows,
all life and breath on you depending:
creation's depth your wisdom shows.
2. Across each continent and island
as dawn leads on another day,
the voice of prayer is never silent,
nor dies the strain of praise away.
3. When we're at rest the sun is waking,
our friends beneath the western sky,
and hour by hour fresh lips are making
your wondrous doings heard on high.
4. Your love, O God, is world surrounding,
like arms that firmly, gently hold.
Your grace, forever new, abounding,
each day your people to enfold.
5. Your love, O God, is ever yearning,
to touch and heal a world of pain;
may we in Christ, be ever learning
bringing to birth that love again.
6. Your love, O God, needs hands and voices;
to hold with care, for justice call.
Help us, O God, through all our choices
to live your love for one and all.

BLESSING

Leader 1: Go now, and live this good news:

Leader 2: God is our Creator. God made us wonderfully. God knows us, and God is with us.

Leader 3: Treat yourself as a precious and beloved child of God. And treat others as precious and beloved children of God.

Amen!

POSTLUDE

Play Cook Islands music written for this service.

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BIBLE STUDY – Psalm 139:14

“I Made You Wonderfully”

We do not know the specific circumstances of when this Psalm was written, but we know it has provided hope and encouragement to so many people.

Psalm 139:1-6 – God Knows Us

1. What examples are given of how well God knows us?
2. How does this make you feel?
3. How and why does God know us in?

Psalm 139:7-12 – God is With Us

4. Why are we sometimes tempted to “flee” from God’s presence?
5. What is a time in your life that you felt the presence of God in the midst of deep struggle?

Psalm 139:13-18 – “God Made Us Wonderfully”

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

6. What is unique and special about the way God created you?
7. What feelings does it evoke in you to know that God created you with reverence and awe?
8. How then should we treat others?

To conclude you may wish to sing a hymn/song praising our God/the Creator and/or say prayers of thanksgiving for God’s Creation.

The complete Bible Study can be found on the World Day of Prayer website – www.worlddayofprayer.org.nz

COUNTRY INFORMATION COOK ISLANDS

The Cook Islands consist of 15 islands, of which 12 are inhabited, scattered over 2 million km of the Pacific Ocean. The capital is Rarotonga with a population of 10,040, out of a total population of 15,040. Many Cook Islanders live abroad, mainly in New Zealand (approximately 80,000) and Australia (20,000)

The Islands were first thought to be inhabited between 500-800 AD by people arriving on double hulled canoes from what is now French Polynesia to the north. The first record of Europeans to visit the Islands was a Spanish explorer in the late 16th Century but then no further record until Captain James Cook during his expeditions of 1773 and 1777. He never landed on Rarotonga but the much smaller Palmerston Island. He named the Islands Hervey Islands after a Lord of the Admiralty, but they were renamed Cook Islands after the great explorer 50 years later by the Russian cartographer, Admiral Adam Johann von Krusenstern.

The Cook Islands are a majority Christian nation, the Gospel having been taken there in 1821 by the London Missionary Society. The missionaries attempted to suppress the singing, dancing and drumming of the inhabitants, however as this was the cultural heritage of the Islands, they found a way to blend their Polynesian heritage with their Christian faith. In 1839 a theological college was set up in Rarotonga to train mainly locals in theological studies, leading to a large number of pastors and church leaders. Christians come together annually for ecumenical prayer for protection during cyclone season and to give thanks for God's protection and blessings.

The *Ariki* are a group of hereditary paramount chiefs of noble rank in Polynesia. Each island in the Cook Islands is ruled by a group of *Ariki* whose status comes not just from birth but also from their achievements and respect within the community. Many women today and in the past have held these leadership roles.

The Cook Islands are in the 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.

Tourism is the main source of income for the Islands (66% of GDP) overtaking agriculture after the international airport opened in 1973. Until then, 70% of the labour force worked in agriculture but now it's only 10%. Tourism brings both advantages and disadvantages to the residents. It brings money into the economy and creates jobs and employment, however a high number of tourists can put pressure on infrastructure and natural resources such as water.

Education in the Cook Islands follows closely to the education system of NZ. The first 3 years of primary schooling (age 5-8) is taught in Cook Islands Maori and then English is introduced from year 4. After year 10, the children start taking exams in English and Maori and after year 12 they can enter tertiary institutions in NZ or around the world. In 2019 a Labour force survey found 80.2% of the labour force had participated to tertiary level with males and females having the same levels of achievement.

Free health care is provided to all students till the age of 18 and to all pensioners after the age of 60. There is a shortage of doctors and skilled nurses and medical care is often referred on to NZ. From 2019-20, life expectancy increased to 82 for males and 86 for females. Immunisation rates for babies is around 90%. Child mortality rates have been declining over recent years, however it is higher in the remote outer islands.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, over 96% of the population was immunised and only 1 death recorded.

Weaving and patchwork quilt making (*Tivaevae*) are important craft skills amongst the women. *Pandanus* (screwpine) and *rito* (coconut leaf fibre) are the main natural fibres used for weaving. *Pandanus* is used to weave mats, baskets, hats, fans and table mats. *Rito* is used to make hats and traditional and dance costumes. Each hat is unique as the weaver who makes it uses techniques handed down the generations. It takes about 5 days to weave a *rito* hat which is worn by women for church and on special occasions. They are gifted for weddings and birthdays and given to visiting VIPs.

Tivaevae is the art of making handmade patchwork quilts. The craft was introduced by missionaries' wives and it's now celebrated throughout the Cook Islands. Women gather in groups to make them and each person is allocated a task. They meet regularly and it can take months or years to complete a quilt or bedspread. They become family heirlooms after being gifted at birthdays and weddings. They are also used to cover or wrap loved ones when they pass on, as a final farewell.

4th August commemorates the birth of the Cook Islands as an independent nation and it is celebrated annually with a week long *Te Maeva Nui Festival*. The people and culture are their greatest assets and the whole country comes to a standstill as they celebrate with arts, crafts, music, song, dance and local food.

The full version of the country backgrounder can be found on the World Day of Prayer website. <https://www.worlddayofprayer.org.nz/>

DISTRIBUTION OF 2024 OFFERINGS

Christian World Service

Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees of the
Middle East Council of Churches programme for
women's co-operatives in the West Bank. \$15,500

Bible Society

The Palestinian Bible Society 'Child of Bethlehem'
Project reaching out to Christian children with Bible-
based programmes. \$15,500

Interchurch Hospital Chaplaincy \$5,000

Church Women United Aotearoa NZ \$500

WDP International Committee \$3,000

WDPANZ Travel Fund \$500

WDPANZ Provision for Expenses \$15,000

Future Themes and Countries

2026 "I Will Give You Rest: Come" – Nigeria

**2027 'United in Prayer for Peace and Justice' – World Day of
Prayer International Committee**

2028 'Leading the Way in Grace' – Costa Rica

2029 'Compassion Brings Healing' – Italy

2030 'As the World Eats, People Can Rest' – Nepal

2031 'A Sign of Faith' – Jamacia

Options for Offering:

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- If **banking** your offering – World Day of Prayer account details are:
Westpac – Account number – 03-1700-0423420-25

Please ensure the following details are recorded on your deposit:

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Northern Cook Islands

- Rarotonga
- Inhabited Islands
- Uninhabited Islands



Southern Cook Islands



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Observed on the first Friday in March each year,
is a worldwide movement of informed prayer
involving people of many denominations and languages
in more than 170 countries.

Each year the service is written
by women in a different country
who share the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows,
opportunities and needs, of their country.

It affirms that informed prayer
and prayerful action are inseparable.



The **World Day of Prayer logo** depicts
a cross, formed by praying figures
from the four corners of the earth,
joined together within the circle of the world.

World Day of Prayer is sponsored by an International Committee
and organised by a National Committee in each country.

World Day of Prayer Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee 2025

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