



Dear Friends,

17th February 2021

It falls to St Peter's this year to represent Christian churches in Farnham and host a service for the World Day of Prayer on March 5th at 10.30. We, Wendy and Roz, have been working with women from different Farnham churches to put into practice the ideas generated in countries as far afield as Zimbabwe, Slovenia and the Philippines and in the next 5 years the service will be designed by women from the UK, Taiwan, Palestine, the Cook Islands and Nigeria! The Wikipedia WDofP page shows an interesting list of countries leading the services since 1927.

It has been moving to gain an insight into the lives of women in diverse communities abroad (and what a challenge for the members of the UK committee, synthesising the diverse strands in British society for 2022!) But where are we going in March? To St Peter's, of course, for the Livestreamed service, but also to the South Pacific, to Vanuatu!

It's a small world! For the last service from St Peter's in 2013 Wendy and Gary Coxell travelled to Paris to prepare a service for us on a perennial theme: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (and, believe it or not, while purchasing biscuits they met the community policeman from Wrecclesham who was then running La Gare du Nord!) And at a zoom meeting last year we met the current Church of England rep, Carole Bourne, who actually flew to Vanuatu recently while visiting her son in NZ! Wendy will show us Carole's holiday snaps at the Livestreamed service... Indeed, international Christianity is exemplified in Vanuatu, having been introduced there by Canadian missionaries in 1946 at a Presbyterian Church.

In the past we have cooked food using recipes from abroad, but we have also enjoyed a fantastic spread at the Baptist Church near the Art School. This year I'm afraid you will have to Bring Your Own if you enjoy "Casser la croute"... (by the way, Bislama is the spoken language of Vanuatu and French and English the Official languages, while the Vanuatu Archipelago of 80 islands was discovered by the Spanish in 1606 and the first island to be named by Europeans was Espiritu Santo, which is not to say that Europe had a monopoly; on Vanuatu 113 languages were spoken until recently!)

The purpose of WDofP is to show us God's Kingdom, but also to support it if we can. The motto is Informed Prayer. Prayerful Action, and you will be able to contribute online or in various other ways. World Day of Prayer is a women-led, global, ecumenical movement, inspired, we feel, by an awareness of injustice as well as love. Education in Vanuatu is neither compulsory nor free; most families can only afford to educate the firstborn and boys get priority; and malnutrition is a growing problem which accounts for most deaths in children under 5.

Let us Pray Together on 5th March at 10.30.

Wendy Coxell and Roz Forsyth