

Brandell e~Scr@pbook

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Grand Opening

This month's island-wide combined assembly was extra special as the church in Etas was able to serve as host for the first time in over a year, coinciding with the grand opening of the new building some 51 weeks after the old one was destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Pam. It was a great day of celebration, thanksgiving, and rededication.

Church members in the Etas Area celebrated the official opening of their new church building with great pride, decorating it with local leaves, flowers, and produce.

It was our pleasure to be a part of the festivities as we looked back at how God has seen us through the devastation, rebuilding, and now the launching of many good things. Lord willing, this building will serve as a gathering place for Christians to encourage one another in their service to the Lord each Sunday, a meeting place for the youth and their friends each Saturday afternoon as we renew our normal youth group activities, a storm shelter for the community in times of severe weather, a source of clean drinking water for the surrounding community, and eventually a school room for the local kindy to resume its efforts in preparing the next generation. Check out our [V2 Brandells Facebook page](https://facebook.com/v2brandells) for video clips and photos from all the day's activities.

Term 1 Complete

It is difficult for us to express how much peace and joy we feel as Titus and Alexis have now completed the first term of the new school year. Only a few months ago Shawnda and I were practically in tears wondering what we were going to do about our children's education, and how that might affect our ability to continuing serving full time in Vanuatu.

God answered our prayers in their new Primary School, as both kids are flourishing. They look forward to school everyday, come home with smiling faces, and receive high marks on their work. Titus, with whom we've had numerous knock-down-drag-out fights over a single assignment during homeschool sessions, now loves to read and write extemporaneously. We are simply in awe each Friday as he brings home the week's completed assignments. By all accounts, Alexis seems to be adapting very well to her new surroundings, has made lots of new friends, and loves her teachers. Praise God for his provision, and sincere gratitude to those who prayed us through hard times!



Outer Island Trip: Tanna (Part 1)

Going forward, our plan is to make a family trip during each of the kids' three two-week school holidays. So, after Term 1 closing on Thursday, we boarded the plane for Tanna Island on Friday morning. We finished up the month (and the first half of our Tanna trip) in Loun Village. Christians from nearby Lorakau Village were with us during the week as well. Cyclone recovery efforts meant that I visited Loun often last year, but was not able to make any dedicated teaching trips. We were all excited to get back to our normal routine of daily Bible study, discussion, fellowship, meals, and singing. Our text for the week came primarily from Titus 2:1-9, with some time also spent setting up the epistle historically and contextually. I am learning more and more how to communicate good Bible study skills in my teaching, and believe the new approach is effective.

While in Loun I also had opportunity to meet with the men and a local builder about their plans for a permanent meeting house. The pieces of local materials they've put back together after the cyclone are severely lacking in both space and protection from the elements, and we are grateful that funds have been generously contributed to meet this need.

It is customary for Tanna islanders to celebrate their first fruits the first Sunday of April, but the church moved the date up a week so that we could be present for the celebration, especially in light of all we've been through together environmentally over the past year. It was a blessing to witness their thanksgiving and continued reliance on God's faithful provision.



“Ow! Dad! That went *right* in my eye!!!”

- ALEXIS, shocked and offended, every single time I put eye drops in to combat her bout with conjunctivitis.

Prayer Requests:

- **2016 Youth Camp**

We aptly dubbed last year's inaugural youth camp "our best week ever" and so we are keenly looking forward to this year's followup, scheduled for May 9-12. Each year our theme will be based on fleeing youthful lusts (2 Tim 2:22), with the focus this year being on avoiding drunkenness and unhealthy speech. We anticipate as many as 50 youth attending, and look forward to a great time together.

- **Malekula Ladies Program**

Lord willing, Shawnda and Abbie will travel to Malekula Island at the end of April to spend a few days with the ladies from Wiaru, Tulwei, Brenwe and Lenbinwen Villages. Be praying for safety and success (and for dad as he stays home with the kids!).

- **LaetHaos Ministry**

Going forward, one of our family's primary focuses will be to bring in Christians from all over the country for a time of spiritual renewal and discipleship. With housing and land secured, we will spend much of the remainder of this year getting things set up for this exciting ministry. Please pray for God's provision and wisdom as we dream and plan with him for the future.



Good times with new American friends in Port Vila



Before-and-After photos of our first DIY project at the new house



Prayer Updates:

- **Etas building project**

Thanks to all those who've contributed time, money and prayer to this major effort. We are looking forward to great things ahead in Etas and beyond!

- **School**

We just can't say thank you enough for the prayers and encouragement we've received over the past couple of years as we've tried to find a "fit" for Titus educationally. God has once again provided and it is important to us that we continually voice our gratitude.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to our 8 year old Lexi-girl... lover of all things fancy and all things pink. Her smiles brighten our day, and her genuine kindness is a beam of light. God has blessed us richly!