



Galaxies Evening Service 23 June 2013

Service by Fergus Collinson
& Peter Cowley



Welcome:

Welcome to our service tonight

Tonight we celebrating Matariki, Maori New Year.



Yes, we set things up to relax ... warmly!

Photo: Fergus

Call to togetherness and sharing:

Leader: God, we are all part of you, your creation, your life and your love.

As we gather together to look forward to a new year, one that starts just after the shortest day. We wait for longer days, sunshine, warmth and new growth of spring.

All: **May the earth renew herself once again as she sleeps over winter, awakens in Spring and comes out to play in Summer, before once again curling up in Autumn getting ready to sleep again.**

Affirmation of Faith

Together: The God of our understanding is varied, vibrant and rich in diversity
Much like we are!
We understand little about the nature of the universe we inhabit
Even though we think otherwise!
Amidst our struggle to find understanding and meaning in our life
Our predecessors in faith give us a glimpse of God that is unsurpassed
A God called Loving-kindness; Peace-on-earth; Justice-for-all
These are our noblest intentions and when we embody and enact them
We, too, enter the Kingdom of God
We too are called - God

Prayers for the people

God of loving-kindness, peace-on-earth and justice-for-all, we pray, that we will help strengthen the hands of all who strive for peace and justice throughout the world, and, seeing that all human beings are our relatives, we will share the pain of those who are oppressed, and will strive to promote the dignity and freedom of every person.

God of love, in the dignity and worth you give to all your creatures, may we always acknowledge and respect the diversity and richness of your creation; that we may honour the persons who come to us; that we may refuse to use or to be used as objects of selfish gratification; and that we may work for equity and justice for all people.

Amen.

Call of Faith to Action

Leader: As we search for some sense in life.

People: *may we find that meaning in our relationships of care, compassion and tenderness.*

Leader: We talk about loving-kindness as God

People: *Let us act with loving-kindness to all people, to all animals, to all of nature on earth*

Leader: We talk about peace-on-earth

People: *Let us not only talk peace, but act peacefully in all we do, and to be peace makers. Let us listen to understand the other peoples point of view.*

Leader: Jesus the Sage challenged the authorities of his time and was tortured and then murdered for his audacity to point out bigotry, prejudice and injustice. In 2000 years the challenge remains just as strong as ever, the dangers just as great - for we

are, all of us, either a part of the problem or a part of the solution. The world needs people who live and breath loving-kindness, peace and justice. Are we that people?

People: **Yes we are that people**



A New Year begins

Why do we celebrate Matariki? The calendar New Year of 1st January, signals the start of longer, warmer days in the Northern hemisphere but has quite the opposite feel here on the other side of the planet. We need a celebration of the return of longer and warmer days too and we have just the thing from our indigenous people, the Maori in Maratiki

Matariki is our Aotearoa Pacific New Year but this cycle is based on the first appearance of Matariki and the first new moon after its sighting.

In the early morning of 10 June, the star cluster Matariki - or Pleiades as it is commonly known - appeared in our dawn skies. The Māori New Year begins with the first new moon after the first appearance of Matariki (although this concept varies from tribe to tribe).

Astronomers generally refer to Matariki as Pleiades. The cluster is a group of many hundreds of stars about 400 light years from Earth and has been recognized since ancient times. The brightest stars are quite easy to see with the unaided eye and in Greek legend bear the names of Seven Sisters, the daughters of Atlas and Pleone, Alcyone, Merope, Asterops, Maia, Taygeta, Calaeno and Electra. Some say that Matariki is the mother surrounded by her six daughters, other stories suggest that Matariki is a male star. These are the Māori names that make up the other six prominent stars of the Matariki cluster, Tupu-a-Nuku, Tupu-a-Rangi, Waitī, Waitā, Waipunarangi and Ururangi.

There are many stories about its significance as a navigational star and also as a portent on whether the coming harvests will be plentiful. If the stars in the cluster are clear and bright, it is thought that the year will be warm and productive. If they appear hazy and shimmering, cold winter is in store for us, and all activities during the period of Matariki must take this into account.



The bright star Puanga - or Rigel - also emerges at about the same time, and for some iwi it is the appearance of Puanga rather than Matariki that has significance and is celebrated.

During Matariki, all activities to do with providing for daily living take on spiritual significance, based on giving respect to the source of life. Crops are planted, and Rongo-ma-tane, the god of cultivated food, is appeased for a productive return. We celebrate our unique place in the world. We give respect to the whenua on which we live, and admiration to our mother earth, Papatūānuku.. We learn about those who came before us. Our history, our family, our bones.

It is a good time to gather pikopiko (fern fronds) and a host of native berries. It is also the right time to cast fishing nets and lines into the depths of Tangaroa, god of the sea, to make the most of bountiful supplies of migrating fish. It's a time of change. It's a time to prepare, and a time of action. During Matariki, we acknowledge what we have and what we have to give.

As the natural world regenerates, and another seasonal round begins, Matariki is a time to not only celebrate culture, language, spirit and people but also to pause and reflect - on the year that was, and the year that will be.

Let us celebrate a new year that starts out in the dark and the cold but brings the promise of longer days, greater light and warmth, new growth, new life, new love, new friends, the start of another important cycle in the life of our country and our relationships and to all that is.

Blessing

Let us stop for a moment and calm our thoughts

as we prepare ourselves for radical action, just like Jesus:

- to act with peaceful, careful listening; even in the face of aggression
- to calmly and lovingly challenge duplicity, bigotry, prejudice and injustice wherever we encounter it.
- to accept people with loving-kindness in all our interactions.
- to share our joy and blessings freely with others.

*and often, just beyond us
or lunging
right up close
is
the energising
terrifying
torrential
rowrr of
life
re-prioritising*

Notices



Stonehenge Aotearoa - every year they have solstice and equinox celebrations!