



Galaxies Service 22 June 2014

Service by Fergus Collinson
& Pete Cowley



Welcome:

Welcome to our service tonight celebrating Winter Solstice and Matariki - the Maori New Year which falls on the 28 June this year and indicates lengthening days, time to plant for spring harvest. Respect for the earth and our biosphere. Celebration of Culture, language, spirit and people



Gathering together

Pete Haere mai
We come to this place of kindness and welcoming
We come to worship God
We come to welcome God with our prayers and songs
We come to think of people who have died
and who shine like stars around us.
We come to thank our lucky stars for warm homes,
for hearty food and clean water
We come to share the starlight of love.

Call to worship

Fergus We are gathered in this sanctuary of light.
Here in the presence of God
We are sheltered from the world of darkness.
Today we meet as the family of God
We come in the bright joy of celebration
We come in the dark sorrow of loss.

All ***In all times and places
we come to rejoice and give thanks.***

Pete United we come as one
Together we stand
All races, religions and genders.
We enter this place of worship,
Coming forth to God's name,
To try and become the people
We have always hoped to be.
Now we stand, gathered
To spread hope, truth and light
In a time of darkness.

All *In all times and places
We come to rejoice and give thanks.*

Hymn

Cosmic Celebration (Words: Ian Cairns. Tune: Hymn to Joy)

1. Celebrate the cosmic birthing,
Flash of primal energy:
Swirling gases, densing matter
Stuff of galaxies to be.
Celebrate the life-force pulsing
through these 15 billion years,
Trillion, trillion stars emerging
From the cradle of the spheres.

2. Celebrate the white-heat furnace-
life evoking mother sun;
Celebrate her planet-offspring
Nine, in cosmic dance as one.

Celebrate her favoured daughter,
Earth, in cloak of fragile green;
Cragging rocks, and sounding ocean-
Surface-lashed, beneath serene.

3. Join the mystic dance of species,
Chaining, weaving, circling, one
Strong-competing, close depending,
Life swift ending, new begun.
Sing our senseful keen awareness-
Form and sound, scent, taste and hue.
High achieving, passing, transient-
Living, dying born anew.

The Shortest Day

Fergus God, we are hankering after more light
We are tired of short days and long nights.
Our feet hardly touch the floor,
We only seem to begin the day
when night closes in on us,
and we are preparing again for our beds.

Pete God, we need more light to brighten up our day.
We need more light to find our way in the world.
We need more heat to take the stiffness out of our bones,
So we can keep up with life and laugh on at the world.

Fergus God, too much darkness makes life dull,
even on the best of days.
Lift off this dim bewilderment.
Let the bright light of your love
shine into our world to brighten up the horizon.

Pete God, we are sick of being in the dark.
We want to feel your penetrating insight
calling in the summer, shrugging off the winter,
waking up the spring,
to make our spirit glad, and bright, full of play.

All God, on the shortest day
we are craving a bit of light,
to stave off our week of night.
Make your presence felt
with fresh enlightenment,
to lift us up with the wonder
of your dawning insight, today.

– Brian Hardie

Affirmation of Faith

All: 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
but we will enjoy its beauty, ponder its mystery, and look after our home
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 allow the Kingdom of God to be created anew within us
We too are called – God

A Winter affirmation:



Stonehenge, United Kingdom

Leader: We have arrived at the Winter solstice, just one day ago and we acknowledge friends who warm us - with coffee or a meal, letters from far away, the loan of a new or old and cherished book, a drink after work, e-mail messages, open fires ... and arms ... and hearts.

People: We thank you for friends warming us.

Leader: As the constellation of Matariki reappears during the waning of the June moon we acknowledge the foods brought by Matariki, the hospitality of others and of ourselves. We are thankful that we can choose to miss breakfast, to work through lunch, to grab a snack, knowing that in a world where many are hungry, we have plenty to eat and to share.

People: We thank our partners in occupation and recreation, we give thanks to those who help provide for our food and drink and shelter.

Leader: As the days shorten and colours fade from earth. We remember those who mourn, and celebrate the lives of those who have died. As the leaves fall and carpet the cool earth, our memories turn scarlet and brown and golden.

People: We acknowledge the winter of loss and mourning; and remember those who live on through their influence in our lives.

Leader: In the season of mid winter festivities, as jester and fool we acknowledge the greening force in nature's vegetation and in us. We shout, "Your health" and think of those whose lives are touched by disease, we send thoughts and healing energy to those who are unwell, and send love to soothe and to heal.

People: We give thanks for greening life, for the promise of new life from the depths of Winter, and for our well-being.

Leader: In Winter darkness, when we doubt our doubting and question our lack of faith. We celebrate questioning and uncertainty. For those who are too sure, we wish the gift of unknowing; For those who know they are right, we wish the adventure of uncertainty. For those who are afraid to disbelieve, we wish the risk of asking questions, For those who vacillate, we wish the heart's ease of choosing what not to believe.

People: When Winter chills us and we think with nostalgia of certainty and assurance, We celebrate the fire of our questioning, the passion of our searching, the integrity of our quest.
(Bronwyn White. 1997. Wellington)



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 Matariki

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. Some say that Matariki is the mother surrounded by her six daughters, other stories suggest that Matariki is a male star.

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 Rigil - 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.

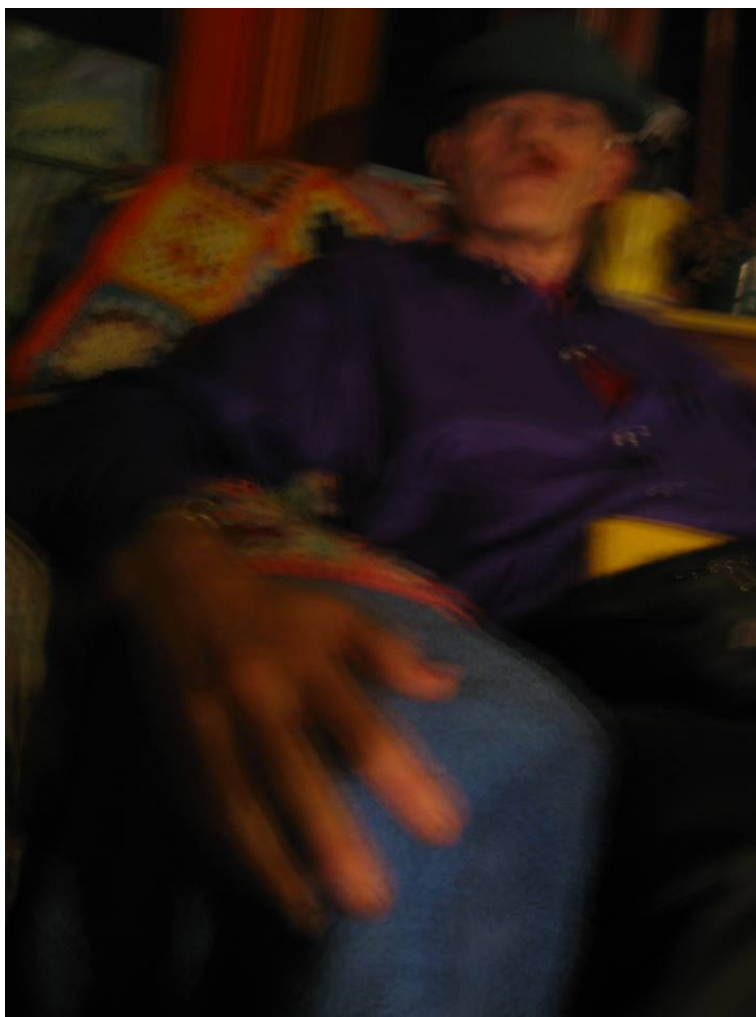
Contemporary Reflection

PAKISTANIS AND PALESTINIANS

This is a marvellously improbable match. Citizen Khan returns to TV 1 Thursday nights, and I'm mesmerised by Faith and Hope in the Face of Empire.

Have the studios where last years Citizen Khan series was made got blown up by righteous Jihadists? Seventy people complained to BBC about its unacceptable depravity. Initially series two shocks me - it never seems quite OK to trash an ambitious pompous prick mercilessly, realistically, even if he is just like my Dad, the way he'd push my Mum to try different options to make life better. Then snitch on her, so she looks stupid.

Nothing is too good for his youngest gal, who is wily and dumb, and knows the way to get ahead with life is - circus marquee make up. I love it that Shazia, the "plain"



I nEVER eVER dREAMED i'D BE a vAN gOGH sELF pORTRAIT. oF CONTENTMENT aND bLISS... i ADORE MATARIKI, and i AM uNBELIEVABLY bLESSED tO bE sURROUNDED & eNERGISED BY pEOPLE WHO aRE VIGOROUS THAT i LOVE. . ROSHAHN PIX. tHANK YOU - ITS pERFECT!

older sis starts to get a life of her own, be assertive. Her man Amjad clicks for me. He's so me! He's slow! Does Amjad need ear gear too? He's me trying to hear people explaining, usually computer stuff, and my brain is so busy it completely blanks out what I'm trying to learn. Both us like to stay out of trouble, uncertainty. Perhaps Amjad's mum is less muscularly benign than she appears. Violence in the home is not always just bad Dads smashing their kids up.

This series there's a new boss man at the mosque. In a perfect world Mr Khan would run over this lovely McGregor look alike ginger too when he slams his bright yellow Ford Fairlane into the disabled parking slot in front of the mosque. Seven seconds ahead of an annoying man in a motorised chair who needs that space. Reverse racism exists!

Faith in the Face of Empire is damn wonderful! Dimitri Raheb is a Palestinian theologian. He argues for Palestinian recognition, and non-violent pushing political boundaries that embrace both Israeli and Palestinians. Yayy! Yayy! But there's big blind spots in his vision.

There's no film names in the index. I want to see Arabic background film makers affirmed, publicised. Most of the ones that challenge me at the Date Palms film fest end with the short phrase. " A fatwa has been declared. The people who made them are in hiding"

My take on Palestinians is their near total hatred of queer people. Although gays are constantly hassled by Israeli police, they're "safer" trying to hide. Last years Reel Queer Film Fest starts with the killing of a man who loved cross dressing on Saturday night after he's wiggled through a tiny hole under the fencing between Ramallah and Tel Aviv. Having a Jewish boy friend isn't enough to save his cousin in the last movie I saw. His family are smuggling explosives in on the reverse journey.

I'm disappointed Mitri Raheb doesn't list gay or queer people at all in the index to his book... will there be another book where we are remembered, recognised? I hope so. He says powerfully pungently that Palestinians and Israelis both share millenniums of being a global cross roads, and lets talk about how Jesus handled oppression. Willingly as an ordinary man in the street who didn't preach revolution. He simply said Love your neighbour.



THIS IS THE SHOT I'VE WANTED TO TAKE EVER SINCE THESE TWO ANIMAL OPPORTUNITY PLATES SAID - FERGUS TAKE ME, OH TAKE ME. ROSHAHN RELAXED. BEHIND HER IS THIS MATTIAS PRETTI, ITALIAN RENAISSANCE PAINTER, AND MY IRRESISTIBLE PAINTING I TAKE HOME, AND DISCOVER MY MATE BRONWYN DID THIS



aNTON rEFLECTS... iN THE sTARTLING SUMPTUOUS rADIANCE oF mY gLASSHOUSE KITCHEN. hE'S oK wITH a sANTA cLAUS bEARD

Two thousand years on this still challenges us to be involved, to be political, to network astutely lovingly. Hours ago my dear Auckland buddy Kim face booked Mitereia Turei, in a totally ignored segment of the budget debate. She confronts John Key about unemployed new Mum's and Dads missing out the Budgets on pregnancy leave top ups. "Yes that is right" his blank stare says as we drift further and further back to Victorian punitiveness..

Increasingly we recognise how important those first few months of life are, in starting continuing healthy lives. In Israel there is a place called The Avenue of the Righteous. One of the people it acclaims is a Warsaw woman who picked up a crying baby who had been thrown over the ghetto fence. She took him home, and miraculously didn't get arrested for smuggling a wee bit of bread home from the bakery where she worked

Matariki it doesn't have the crazy pressuredness of Christmas. Its totally OK to just be, to socialise, to enjoy, to think about where life has got me. I am terrifically incredibly enormously blessed to have a sunshiny home that energises me. I am thinking of Tomtom, a street boy, who ran away from Hamilton, and his uncle who bashed him up. He want s to write, he's optimistic and hopeful. I could easily have been him -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 the respect the diversity and richness of your creation; that we may honour the persons who come to us; and have come before us.

May we learn the lessons of the past; and work for equity and justice for all people by putting right that which is wrong, by calling to account those who do wrong. Amen.

The blessing

Pete:

As we near the shortest day of the year
we teeter on the brink of a promise
of hope and light.

The cold winds of winter
whisper of spring.

May the beauty of the earth
Fill you with wonder.

May the love of your ancestors
wrap around you like a cloak.

May this new year be bursting with possibilities
unfurling like fern fronds.

May your life be filled with blessings
as numerous as the stars.



Notices