



# Galaxies Service 28 June 2015

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 18 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 give worth to God - the symbol of our highest ideals  
We come to think of people that we have loved 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 all we hold as worthy  
We are sheltered from the world of darkness.  
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



*Stonehenge, Aotearoa (outside of Featherston)*

## A Winter affirmation:

**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 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.**

## Contemporary Reflection

### BARE BRANCHES and MATARIKI

In the Trolley Bus junction  
of BARE BRANCHES  
lean over the ladder deck  
intersect, is one very bright rosehiporange  
glow that repeatedly delights me.  
After Our Zoo I'm standing here  
holding my tin candle stick holder in  
my two hands, for you both  
- I think its a trick of the light, its a  
soft goldlemon reflection, probably a node  
I love the action of getting going with what  
we start with, and your Cernuhi  
journey takeoff -  
love and encouragement dear buddies



*Two decades ago I met McGregor again on a rainy Monday  
night in a jazz joint where Marg Layton was doing her  
I've been singing 25 years anniversary.*

*You haiku superbly! Life come. Life go, Never ending flow*



*We're at Potocki Gallery at my show -  
such liberating space -  
3 pix shimmy sunshine soar. Carouse!*

*We Could Never have been friends  
Slither Dizzy Panoramic Upwards  
Far off beyond time -rowers sing*



*Its so early - I'm wide awake, thinking*

*This is glorious, grab my camera, and savour the doorway  
into my living room.*

*I am really really hoping Rory's E is still the same, so he can  
come to my fIERCE mONGOLIAN pEASANT wORDS AT  
pOTOCKI gALLERY.*

*It is and he says, I want my boy to meet his grand dad*

## The blessing

**Pete:**

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

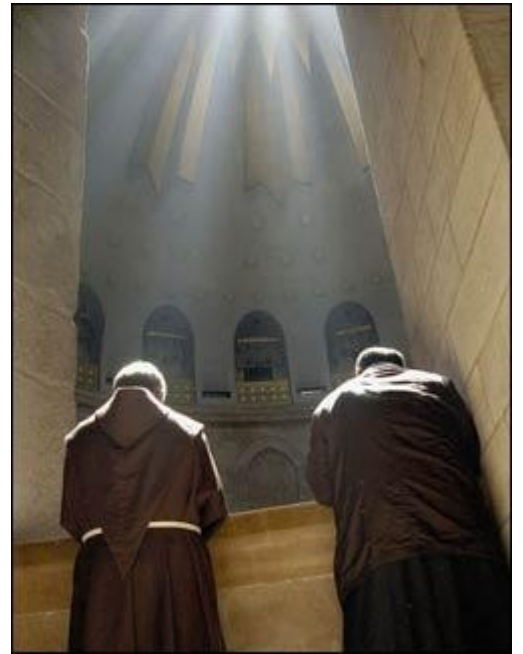
The cold winds of winter  
whisper of spring.

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

## Reaching for Rainbows

I keep reaching for rainbows . . .

Thinking one God's morning,

I will wake up with rainbow ribbons in my hair,  
With hurts painted over in hues that only angel wings could brush,  
Black obliterated, chaos hurled beyond the rainbow and my vision,  
The world created in a myriad of colours:  
The Hungry fed,  
The dying held,  
The maimed walking,  
The angry stroked,  
The violent calmed,  
The oppressed freed,  
The oppressors changed,  
And every tear wiped away.



I keep reaching for rainbows,

But instead of colours in our storm,

Gray and black infiltrate, dirtying the sky,  
And I hear human voices wailing in the darkness,  
The never-ending darkness . . .

Just the same

I know the promise of the rainbow.  
I keep thinking I'll turn a corner one day  
And find a litany of rainbows  
Flung across the sky,  
Hosannaing back and forth  
Through all the ages and  
Out into eternity forever amen!

Every tear wiped away ☐

It's a promise ☐

When we become rainbows to each other.