



## Galaxies Evening Service 20 August 2006

Service by Pete Cowley & Fergus Collinson



### Welcome:

Welcome to our service tonight called "Walking Stones" which is a reflection on our change of venue (amongst other things).

Please select a candle and a stone as well as a place to sit/be



*An example of stones that have "walked" and are now living in a tight-knit community and gainfully employed on Fergus's sun deck!*

### **Gathering:**

Now is the time to catch up with each other over tea/coffee and some nibbles and look around our new venue.

### **Intro (Fergus)**

We're here for the first time in our new venue - I have been here just twice before - and so this also an adventure for me. A marker in our shared spiritual journeys. I/ We have a mix of anxiety, and anticipation.

We'll read this uneasy, but adventurous poem **Potatoes by Phone** (As we do this, we light a candle from the Galaxies candle, and light our neighbour's one)

## Potatoes By Phone (by Christopher Woods)

Reading it the third time,  
I am still amazed.  
Hungry, after midnight,  
In a hotel room in Galveston,  
I scan the room service menu in my lap.  
There under the "Omelette" heading,  
It says all are served with warm biscuits  
And yes, with "mourning" potatoes.

I am a realist and do not believe  
That biscuits will climb four floors  
And arrive still warm at my door.  
That they arrive at all is sufficient.  
That I have lived all this time,  
Through all kinds of culinary weather,  
Never to know that some potatoes,  
By design or scheme or recipe,  
Are meant only for mourning.  
I have eaten them in all kinds of moods,  
Even outside my homeland,  
Never once, I think, funereally.

But I am also starving.  
I pick up the phone and dial,  
Ordering them without question.  
Then, waiting in the dark,  
I hear waves crash against the seawall.  
Somewhere in the bowels of this old hotel  
A cart is rolling this way,  
And for an instant  
I do not care if even death  
Comes riding on it.

## First Bible reading: Joshua 4:18-24

I love bringing rocks, driftwood, trash from the edge of the sea, It  
tunes me back into being alive, vibrant - if I'm very focused I can  
hear waves

I am particularly thinking of Presbyterian Church's General Assembly  
in September?

A high agenda thing for them to resolve, to vote for or against - is the pesky problem of what  
to do with queer people - Today's headlines are a resolute statement which states; We don't  
want to have people participating in the life of the Presbyterian Church unless they are married  
or celibate. This will be voted on.



Being officially outlawed will make it much harder, or impossible, for gay and lesbian people to bless and affirm themselves and others

In Owaka my Mum's church split

I thought, oh great.

Thank you God there are people who are unfazed by diversity.

I learned real fast both warring factions are united in their loathing of us.

One group wanted the money from the Presbyterian Church for the buildings

The other group didn't want to wait

Southland Times thought this is interesting and ran a write-up headlined Sex and Avarice

Carolyn, my friend, said this being Invercargill, Southland, her reporter friend was fired

I only let Carolyn out me in the Clutha Leader, after she'd checked with my friend Jan that I

stay with that she isn't worried about her place being smashed up by the rednecks church hostility feeds into.

I am painting my mate Bill Edginton's name on my rock

He has been a support person at General Assembly

He's also a person whose vision of queer people being made welcome in God's family got Galaxies started

I've written a poem for his birthday next month - I call it...

### **NEST SLASHED THE CURTAINS OVER THE MOMENT IT GOT DARK (by Fergus Collinson)**

The night he moved out

I left them open

I'm captivated staring down all the trees

squashed into my boundary fence

All amiable abandon slugging it out

It's my Taumaranui - Stratford country mail-bus train ride

5 years old wild paradise

The wattle tree you gave me all those years ago when I turned 40

fronting them

The blossom looked tired - then

to my great delight, on another

endless rain week

I see new lemon shoots

squirting out

that zap me

(I'm having a draggy time with some sort of flu I picked up

half way through THE Film Fest -

I missed a must see bunch

I can't imagine coming back)

PS Let me know about your birthday -

I have a spare decoupage bowl that needs a fond

Liberal Christian home soon

It'll float down your river, we're

all enjoyed  
with black cherries, dark bitter chocolate  
an 87% bottle of kirsh

We alternate each verse of Louie Crew's poem "A Psalm from Fort Valley" with  
Anne Murray's "Beyond Fear is Love"

Oh, Lord, we call to you from our apartment  
because we are not welcome in the church hall.  
Hear us and help us with this terrible fear.  
Do not freeze our hurt into false smiles.  
Deliver us from countenancing in ourselves  
the rumors our enemies spread about us.  
Help our enemies to come to terms  
with that in themselves  
which they project on us.  
Turn their evil into good, oh God.  
Make of their children's spit on our faces  
a salve for healing the pains  
which they have inflicted.  
Be miraculous, God!  
Do not fear to show your glory on the side  
of your children.  
Why have our accusers refused even to hear us?  
How can your Church tolerate spiritual lynchings?  
Deliver us from vigilantes, God.

Through each life time - run rivers to cross  
What if there's no life line and you're sinking or lost  
Just believe in your direction  
Let your heart explore  
Cause you can't reach new horizons  
Standing on the shore

How they hiss against us,  
gossiping on their phones  
all the day long.  
One of their most articulate ones  
drives his car to house after house,  
peddling the Vestry's hateful petition  
to ask us to leave.  
What does he think as the remnant,  
the two loving women,  
turn him away?  
Is he ready to be judged with that judgment  
which he has meted to us?  
Help him, God.

There are mountains - we need to climb  
But the mountains standing in our way are only in our minds  
And the risk of going nowhere  
Is the greatest risk of all  
So just listen to the voice that says  
I'll catch you if you fall

Why do you allow the proud to turn your house  
of prayer into a court house?  
Why do you allow your priests to bully us,  
to insult us,  
to spread lies about us in their councils,  
and yet to ignore us  
when we are sick or in danger or in need?  
Why have you allowed your house  
to become a temple of self-righteousness  
rather than a house of honest sinners?

On the other side of doubt is faith  
On the other side of pain lies strength  
The journey may seem endless  
When You know the road is rough  
But on the other side of fear... is love

About ourselves we have spoken the truth  
in love, God,  
and the keepers of the Church  
have turned us away.  
Were we to debauch ourselves with hypocrisies  
and in secret to be consumed  
in anonymous lust,  
they would honor us, God,  
and welcome us as like themselves.  
But they have hated us for loving openly  
and responsibly.  
They ride by our apartment  
with orgies in their heads  
while we cook supper  
and wash dishes together.

For such a long time I put my dreams aside  
The tides of change felt dangerous  
The mountains seemed too high  
But my dreams were slowly fading  
As time went quickly by  
So I took a breath with every step  
Never knowing I would find...



Heal this sick town, God.  
You promised that the meek will inherit  
the earth, that with Christ  
we are joint heirs  
of your everlasting kingdom.  
Keep us aware that we are your children.  
Ready us for our witness.

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### Second reading 1Peter 1:4-6

The matter of fact translation which is meant to be ecstatic ... isn't - so I've had a go at revving it up!

**Walking Stones** (a poem based on 1peter 1:4-6 by Fergus Collinson)

We are walking loved lively stones  
connecting into a spiritual home  
to be renewing wholesome priestess's and  
priests  
offering spiritual sacrifices  
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ  
Our Bible tells us -  
SEE  
I lay a stone in Zion  
a chosen  
a precious  
cornerstone  
We are trusting in you  
That You will never let us down



### Painting of rocks

I have bought some paints with me, we'll personalise our rock by painting the name of a friend,  
a lover, an enjoyable innovative mentor - our criteria is over to you

### Third reading Revelations 2:17

You who have ears, LISTEN to what the Heavenly Guest says to the churches -  
To over-comers, I give some of the hidden manna.  
I also give you a white stone with a new name written on it  
known only to you who receive it

#### **Anne Bogun's Saint Gerard's reflection**

Your St Gerard's is very eye catching. You talk about the light that evening.  
I see a message in this picture - did you paint it for this reason?  
I see it as homosexuality vs. Christianity.  
I see a little man at the front corner of the church. He is short with a beard.  
The front side of the hill is painted as a circumcised penis.

So have you painted it so that the preacher man is out facing the penis?  
God is the cloud. What gets you is that you can't decide what God is going to do...

Is God going to  
watch the two  
factions fight it  
out when the  
answer is in front  
of us all along?  
That God loves  
everyone, lets us  
all live in harmony  
as intended.

Or is it the  
moment when  
Christian people  
will accept that  
God has created  
homosexuals and  
we must all live  
together?

The coming  
together of the  
two factions under  
God's watchful  
eye.



## Blessing poem

**Domestic Scene** by Lorna Crozier (we read around...)

I mop the floors, admire again the grain,  
the beautiful simplicity of wood.  
The cat we named Nowlan after the poet  
who just died, cries for his tin of fish.  
You stuff our salmon with wild rice  
and watercress, its flesh pink  
as Nowlan's mouth, his perfect tongue.  
How lucky we are to have found each other,  
our fine grey cat, a fresh Atlantic salmon.  
Tomorrow we may get drunk and fight  
or buy two tickets to Madrid.  
But tonight the light in our kitchen  
is as good as you'll find anywhere.  
The plates glow with possibilities  
and the cat licks himself completely clean.

**An informal time where we say - How was it for you?**

## **Announcements**

