



Galaxies Evening Service 17 June 2007

Service by Pete Cowley



Welcome:

Welcome to our service tonight celebrating Matariki - the Maori New Year which falls on this very night and indicates lengthening days, a time to plant for the spring harvest, respect for the earth and our biosphere.

It is a time for celebration of culture, language, spirit and people past and present. This is also the time (almost) for the winter solstice. Christmas should be celebrated at this time of year in our southern hemisphere not in December. It is one of those religious events transplanted by the missionaries that were not adjusted for the down under seasons along with Easter and a few others. The traditional New Year is celebrated mid-winter in the northern hemisphere where it came from so it should have been adjusted for the southern hemisphere.



Time for reflection

*Winter, season of hidden mystery -
of death that leads to life
sleep that leads to reawakening
reflection that leads to action .*

Bill Wallace.

Gathering together (Written by Jono, Matthew & Chris, St. Andrew's Rainbow Room)

Leader Haere mai
We come to this place of kindness and welcome
We come to worship God, however you conceive
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

Leader: In the time of darkness, light emerges:

People: **Light to guide us on.**

(a candle is lit)

Leader: In the heart of a southern winter

People: **We celebrate the turning of the earth.**

(a candle is lit)

Leader: In the calendar's mid year

People: **We celebrate the new year, Matariki.**

(a candle is lit)

Leader: God, you dance in the stars promising Spring hope and light and love.

People: **We join ourselves to the earth in transformation and renewal
naming ourselves, our home, in this place.**

(a candle is lit)

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.



Notices

If you have any notices to bring to our attention please speak up.

PRAYER

Leader : God of winter, we praise you. God of soaking rains, of hail and snow, wind and storm

People: Of torrents surging down creek beds, streams filling reservoirs, and tanks full and running over.

Leader: God of brisk winter mornings, of frosted paddocks under moonlight of warm socks, coats, and gloves, heaters, radiators, and glowing fires.

People: God of little children splashing in puddles, sailing make-believe boats in flooded gutters, of raincoats, and umbrellas, and gum-boots, and the scent of hot soup from the kitchen.

Leader: God of winter, glorious winter, the unpopular, slandered season yet one filled with renewed hope for farms, town and city.

People: God of life- sustaining winter, author of recreation and providence renewing the roots of life. God of glorious winter, blessed is your name in all the earth. (Abridged. Bruce D. Prewer, Australia .)

A Winter affirmation:

Leader: As we arrive at the Winter solstice, 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 in 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)

Contemporary reflections

Nativity

They were set for the home, but the horse went lame
And the rain came pelting out of the sky
Joe saw the hut and he went to look
And he said, 'She's old, but she'll keep you dry'

So her kid was born in that roadman's shack
By the light of a lamp that'd hardly burn
She wrapped him up in her hubby's coat
And put him down on a bed of fern

Then they came riding out of the night
(And this is the thing that she'll always swear)
As they took off their hats and came into the light
They knew they were going to find her there

Three old jokers in oilskin coats
Stood by the bunk in that leaking shack
One had a beard like a billy goat's
And one was frail and one was black

She sat at the foot of the fern stalk bed
And she watched, but she didn't understand



Roadman's shack, central North Island, 1904

While they put these bundles at the baby's head
And this river nugget into his hand

Gold is the power of a man with a man
And incense the power of man with God
But myrrh is the bitter taste of death
And the sour-sweet smell of the upturned sod

Then they went, while she watched through the open door
Weary as men who had ridden too far
And the rain eased off and the low cloud broke
And through a gap shone a single star

From *An Ordinary Joker: The Life & Songs of Peter Cape* (2001)

Matariki Jacq Carter

Matariki turns
her face to us once more
it's a wonder she returns
year after year
when so many celebrate
the beginning of the year
on the 1st of January
with wine and beer

Matariki turns
her face to us once more
this year
again
we will remember her

with ritual
hangi
dance
and song

by telling her the names
of all of those who've gone

Solstice Poem

In this house (in a dying orchard,
behind it a tributary
of the wilderness, in front a road),
my daughter dances
unsteadily with a knitted bear.

During Matariki we
celebrate our unique place in
the world.

We give respect to the
whenua on which we live,
and admiration to our
mother earth

Papat nuku.

Throughout Matariki
we learn about those who
came before us.

Our history. Our family.
Our bones.

Matariki signals growth.

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.

Matariki celebrates the
diversity of life.

It's a celebration of culture,
language, spirit and people.

Matariki is our
Aotearoa Pacific New
Year.

Her father, onetime soldier
touches my arm.
Worn language clots our throats,
making it difficult to say
what we mean, making it
difficult to see.

Instead we sing in the back room, raising
our pagan altar
of oranges and silver flowers.
our fools' picnic, our signal,
our flame, our nest, our fragile golden
protest against murder.

Outside, the cries of the birds
are rumours we hear clearly
but can't yet understand. Fresh ice
glints on the branches.

In this dark
space of the year, the earth
turns again toward the sun, or
we would like to hope so.

Margaret Atwood



The blessing

Leader

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.

Departure

God, in all the changing seasons of our lives, in darkness and in light, in sorrow and in joy, in our successes and in our failures, you are our keeper and companion. In that confidence we leave this set-apart place knowing that you go with us. You are the dawn for which we wait and the hope by which we live by, the warmth for which we long, our freedom now and forever