



Galaxies Evening Service 22 June 2008

Service by Pete Cowley



Welcome:

Welcome to our service tonight celebrating Matariki - the Maori New Year which fell on 5 June this year, 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 the time for the winter solstice which occurred at dusk last night. Christmas really should be celebrated at this time of year in our southern hemisphere not in December.

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.

Greetings

Mihi ki te whenua
Greetings to this land
To the icy June winds that race across the harbour
To the Tararua mountains, dusted with snow
To the harbour, storm-tossed and grey
He mihi aroha

Mihi ki nga mate
Greetings to the dead,
to our ancestors
who laid down the path we walk on
and to loved ones
whose absence still aches like an open wound
He mihi aroha

Mihi ki a koutou katoa
And warmest greetings to all of you
If this is your first visit to Galaxies
or if you have returned after an absence
we welcome you.
Your presence enriches us
and this time together.
He mihi aroha.

Lighting the GalaXies candle

This candle symbolises inclusiveness
everyone is welcome in our community.

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)



Passing the Peace:

Leader: Now that we are reminded that God the free Spirit shares itself with us, we can share our peace and love with one another.

Let us feel the power of the earth that holds us together.

Let us celebrate our gifts in song and dance.

Let us all rejoice in our power and our beauty.

All: We open our hearts to the miracle of birth and the mystery of God's love in all Creation. We carry in us the divine spark. The gift of love, which we share tonight, deepens us as people, deepens us as sisters and brothers.

Each person shares hugs, or whatever you are comfortable with, with those around them.

Notices

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

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)



Stonehenge Aotearoa

Contemporary reflections

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

The Night Sky, by Joy Cowley

Oh God, when I stand under the stars
I am filled with nameless awe
at the immensity of your presence
and I wonder how, in my daily thinking
I can make you so small.

Oh Holy One, the All of existence
How can I claim to know your mind?
How can my tiny words describe the Word
that brought this universe into being?
Could it be that I worship an idol of my own making?

In your all-pervading presence, you know
The limitations of the human heart.
Have you given us this night sky
this vision of galaxies growing and unfolding
to remind us that we have two gods
one that we make in our image
and the One who made us?

Oh God, I stand under the stars
filled with nameless awe.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to us the Church.
Thanks be to God.

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.

Circle of prayer

In our circle of prayer today we think of all those who are working to care for our fragile earth. We remember those who work to nurture te reo Maori, teachers and learners alike. We pray for all those who strive for peace and understanding amongst the peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand



The blessing by Fionnaigh McKenzie

Leader
year

As we reach the shortest day of the
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