



Galaxies Evening Service 24 August 2008

Service by Pete Cowley



Welcome:

Spring has sprung! Well almost After a long cold and wet winter
Spring has almost arrived, at least according to the calendar.

Time for reflection

Of the first fire, she sings - of the first fire of Spring, she sings,
Her voice ringing clear in the cold winter air,
as she rises and gathers her things.

In the first light, she yawns - in the first light of dawn, she yawns,
The grove is asleep in Brigid's fair keep
and the door fills with mist from the lawns.

In her bare feet, she walks - in her bare feet, in the frost, she
walks. She walks to the well, her buckets to fill,
where they've hung strips of colourful cloth.

Like water the Spring shall rise - like water, the Spring, she cries, shall rise! When weather is
harsh, and the reeds in the marsh bend with the snow and the ice.

So sweet is the song of the water - so sweet is the singing of fire and water
She pours in the pot all the water she's got to heat for her sons and her daughters.

Of the sacred fire, she shouts!

The sacred fire's gone out! she shouts, But no one hears through the sleep in their ears, she's
the only one up and about.

So singing she carries the wood - so singing she carries the load of wood. She might as well
sing, she's done everything, yet her people are kind and good.

But sometimes the people forget Sometimes the people, says Brigid, forget. So she kindles the
flame, and she calls it by name, and it rises and comes to her yet.

Of the first fire, she sings - of the first fire burning, she sings - Then she disappears, like the
smoke in the air, like the unseen beginnings of Spring.



The moment of First Light lies exactly midway between winter solstice and spring equinox. It is a time of stirrings, when the increasing light is felt but not quite believed in..

Gathering together

Leader: We are all part of the rhythm of life.
As we mark this turning of the season
may we blossom with peace.

People: **May we be makers of the peace.**

Leader: Where there is joy and hope.

People **We will celebrate and share it together.**

Leader: Jesus says to us, 'Come and follow me' Now we bind our
hearts together and reaffirm our commitment to think wisely, to act justly, to live
compassionately and party joyously.

People: **Amen.**



Call to worship

We come together to hear how old cultures celebrated the seasons and the wonders of the spirit of God

Let us be sensitive to your Spirit, O God, that we may discern the movement of the cycles of nature, care for the earth and each other and help all to flourish.

Prayer

**I weave a silence on my lips,
I weave a silence into my mind.
I weave a silence within my heart,
I close my ears to distractions,
I close my eyes to attentions,
I close my heart to temptations.**

Calm me, O Lord, as you stilled the storm;

Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm;

Let all the tumult within me cease;

Enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

– Traditional Celtic prayer



Affirmation of faith

We believe

in God the creator who gives birth to all that is .. with labour and sighing and looks to the world with joy and love.

We believe

in Christ the reconciler, who is earthed in our life and enfleshed in its patterns of dying and rising, who gives honour to our reality and grace to our way.

We believe

in God the free Spirit, who weeps with our grieving in the depths of our darkness and dances among us high on life's mountains - the Spirit who finds us with newness and hope.

We believe

in the community of faith, which is born of our humanness, is nurtured in sharing and grows whole in our struggling and celebration as one people of God.

Notices

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

Contemporary reflections

Festival of First Light

Reflections of the festival and its origins in many other cultures

Thoughts, reflections, Discussion.

First Light Ritual

Leader: Great Spirit of Love, bless and purify this cleansing water, imbue it with your power of love to cleanse, heal and renew, to take away our hurts, cares and worries. **(Light the three candles in the bowl of water)**

All: We become aware of the subtle movement of the seasons. As we progress from winter to spring, we become aware of increasing light as we reach the midway point between the winter solstice and spring equinox. **(light a candle)**

All: We celebrate the energy of awakening by naming goddesses of fire and of the dawn, of air and of light: Brigid, Mahuika, Ruaroha, or the maidens returned from the underworld: Persephone, Proserpina, Kore. **(light a candle)**

All: I select a stone to carry my cares and worries - to signify something I want to leave behind, to have cleansed and purified and made new in love again. **(select stone and drop it gently into the bowl of water)**



(light the last candle)



All: It is dawn, after a long night. We awake from our dreams to begin a new day.

The days grow longer, Let the light call forth new life from the ground. The season grows warmer. Let the fire of the returning sun warm the Earth.

The winter fades out, to be replaced by the spring. Let all who shiver in the cold share the warmth of the fire.

We welcome the beginning of a new day. New joys. New possibilities. As dawn burns away the fog of the past, let us clear our minds of grudges and confusion so that we may truly see and hear each other.

All: May the three candles of illumination be with you: the flame of truth, the flame of nature, and the flame of knowledge.

Blessing

Blessed be the earth, and all who dwell upon it.

We give thanks for the season now departing from us,
For the blessings it has bestowed upon us,
And upon those with whom we share this world.

Blessed be the new season.

We pray that it will be a time filled with peace,
With abundance, with prosperity,
With wisdom,
With love.

Blessed be all who share this planet.

Let us now prepare for the time ahead
By opening our hearts, and our minds, and our spirits.
Blessed be.

Departure

As we depart from this place
of light,

love,

and warm hearts

may we be a light to others

may we treat all we meet with loving-kindness

may we warm others hearts with our care and commitment
to compassion, truth and justice
in all our dealings.