



# Galaxies Gathering

27 June 2010

Service by Pete Cowley &  
Fergus Collinson



## Welcome:

**Leader:** Now that we have greeted each other and shared a meal we are reminded that God the free Spirit shares itself with us, thus we can share our peace and love with one another.

**All:** We open our hearts to the mystery of God's love in all things. We carry in us the divine spark, the gift of love and care for others which deepens us as people, deepens us as sisters and brothers of the ever changing creation.

## The Gathering

**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

**People:** We come to share the  
starlight of love.

## Our theme tonight:

Our gathering tonight  
celebrates Matariki - the Maori  
New Year.

Matariki indicates lengthening  
days, a time to plant for the  
spring harvest, respect for the  
earth and our biosphere.

It is also a time for celebration  
of culture, language, spirit and  
people past and present.

In the Māori language Matariki  
is both the name of the  
Pleiades star cluster and also  
of the season of its first rising  
in late May or early June -  
taken as the beginning of the  
new year.



### Call to contemplation

**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)*

### A Winter affirmation:



*Stonehenge, United Kingdom*

**Leader:** We have arrived at the Winter solstice, a few short days 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 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)*

*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.*

## Matariki DVD presentation from the Carter Observatory

What are the similarities to the *Genesis* story.  
What other parallels are there that you can see?  
What did you learn that was new?

### 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.



aFTER mY cOMPULSORY nOT gOING oFF tO sLEEP (Fergus Collinson)

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome catnap  
there's the chore  
of trying to sort  
dinner

... its after 2  
Matariki moon  
you are glorious gorgeously engorged  
yellow  
about to disappear behind Brooklyn  
"slumbering man"...

Felix writing  
"Orongorongos  
from McGregor's  
Route 20  
bed"

Earlier - when I go outside to  
piss  
I see  
japonica white buds  
pop and flare  
above energised  
honest branches  
bare scrawl

Upward lurch  
two ladders  
pull my eye  
backwards...  
to the splendidness of  
Bethney McLennan's  
Indulgence gardening  
page, long ago  
photo of  
snow  
on a Japanese garden  
formal  
Hanmer

I save all my  
sharp, non Chronic Fatigue Syndrome sane  
images  
If I have lost it.  
I have not  
Forgotten you



*in the cold glare of winter  
there is  
also  
the glow of life lived  
Life loved.*

## The blessing by Fionnaigh McKenzie

**Leader:** As we reach 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.

**People:** Amen

## The Thanksgiving - Gloria by Joy Cowley

**Leader:** Glorious are you, Mystery of Life  
essence of all creation  
You are the symphony of stars and planets.  
You are the music of the atoms within us.  
You are the dawn on mountain peaks,  
the moonlight on evening seas.  
Forest and farm, the rush of the city,  
everything is embraced in your love.

**People:** **We rejoice as we speak our gratitude.**

**Leader:** Glorious are you, O Jesus Christ,  
Cosmic love in human flesh.  
You graced the smallness of time and place  
to teach us to dance to the music.  
You walk on our seas and heal in our streets.  
You make your home in our lives,  
revealing that cross and resurrection  
are one on the road to freedom.

**People:** **We rejoice as we speak our gratitude.**  
**Glorious are you, O spirit of Truth,**  
**wisdom and breath of our being.**  
**You are the wind that sweeps our senses.**  
**You are the fire that burns in our hearts.**  
**You are the needle of our inner compass,**  
**always pointing to true North,**  
**guiding us on the sacred dance**  
**into the Mystery of Life.**  
**We rejoice as we speak our gratitude.**



## Departure

**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 .)



*Day breaks: Lightning over the Orongorongos. Photo: Gerard Smith*