

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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PARISH BULLETIN 22 JUNE 2025

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY – 29 JUNE 2025

10:00am	St Kilda Church	Joint Service
Service at 56 Queens Drive, St Kilda.		
RADIO CHURCH		
8.30 am		Fr Vaughan Leslie
	OAR 105.4FM	
	1575AM	
Live stream	oar.org.nz	

Please note you can now listen to RADIO CHURCH every Sunday on OAR 105.4FM, 1575AM or Livestream via oar.org.nz

Services at Mornington can be watched on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/@morningtonmethodist1598>

PARISH EVENTS COMING UP

25 June 2025 Mornington Fellowship AGM, Mornington Church, 2PM

29 June 2025 Joint Service at St Kilda



Mornington Fellowship AGM

All members and friends of the Mornington Methodist Church are invited to come and join us.



A Short AGM followed by a leisurely, social afternoon tea.



Matariki and Puanga: A Time of Reflection, Renewal, and Hope From an Essay on Matariki by President Te Aroha Rountree

As we journey through the seasons of the year, certain times invite us to pause, reflect, and turn our hearts toward both the heavens and the earth. One such time in Aotearoa New Zealand is the rising of Matariki and Puanga—celestial events rooted in Māori tradition that mark the Māori New Year. These moments provide a rich opportunity for cultural connection, spiritual renewal, and shared reflection within our faith communities.

What is Matariki?

Matariki is the Māori name for a cluster of stars also known as Pleiades. It reappears in the pre-dawn sky in mid-winter, usually in June or early July, marking the beginning of the Māori lunar new year. For many iwi (tribes), the heliacal rising of Matariki (its first appearance before dawn) signals a time of remembrance, celebration, and preparation for the future.

The name "Matariki" is often translated as "the eyes of God" (Ngā mata o te ariki), referring to the Māori creation story in which Matariki is linked to the god Tāwhirimātea, the god of winds and weather. After the separation of Ranginui (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother), Tāwhirimātea is said to have plucked out his eyes and cast them into the heavens in sorrow, where they became the Matariki cluster.

Matariki is made up of nine stars, each with its own meaning, connected to aspects of the environment and wellbeing:

- **Matariki** – reflection, hope, wellbeing of people
- **Pōhutukawa** – remembering those who have died
- **Tupuānuku** – food grown in the ground
- **Tupuārangi** – food from the sky (birds, fruits)
- **Waitī** – freshwater and its creatures
- **Waitā** – the ocean and its bounty
- **Waipunarangi** – rain
- **Ururangi** – winds
- **Hiwa-i-te-rangi** – wishes, goals, and aspirations

What is Puanga?

Not all iwi use Matariki to mark the New Year. In some regions, especially along the west coast of the North Island and parts of the South Island, Puanga (also known as Rigel, a star in the Orion constellation) is observed instead. This is due to the local geography—Matariki is often not visible from some places due to mountains or weather patterns. For those iwi, Puanga's rising just before dawn is the key signal of the new year.

Puanga serves the same purpose as Matariki: a time to mourn those who have passed, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future. The traditions around Puanga are equally rich, often involving storytelling, seasonal food, and expressions of gratitude to creation and the divine.

Spiritual Themes and Christian Reflections

For a Methodist church community, Matariki and Puanga offer moments of deep spiritual alignment with our Christian values. Although rooted in Māori cosmology, these observances reflect themes that resonate strongly with our faith tradition.

1. Remembrance and Honouring the Dead

One of the central aspects of Matariki is Pōhutukawa, the star that connects to those who have passed away. During this time, many whānau remember loved ones through prayer, story, and reflection. In Christian practice, this mirrors the idea of All Saints Day or moments in the liturgical year when we acknowledge the "cloud of witnesses" who have gone before us.

This is a time to honour the legacy of faith and love our ancestors have left us, and to give thanks to God for the gift of their lives.

2. Gratitude for Creation and Provision

Each star in the Matariki cluster relates to different parts of the natural world—land, sea, sky, and weather. The Māori worldview sees the world as deeply interconnected, with people being kaitiaki (guardians) of creation.

This connects closely to stewardship theology in the Christian tradition: we are called to care for creation as a gift from God (Genesis 2:15). During Matariki, we can reflect on how we treat the environment, give thanks for food and resources, and consider our role in sustaining the earth.

3. Hope and Renewal

Hiwa-i-te-rangi, the star of wishes and aspirations, invites people to set goals for the new year. Traditionally, it is a time of planting intentions—spiritual, physical, and relational—for the seasons ahead.

Similarly, as followers of Christ, we believe in the power of renewal. Just as Lent and Easter mark death and resurrection, Matariki symbolises the cycle of life, death, and new beginnings. It's a time to reset spiritually, to commit to God's purpose, and to live with renewed faith, hope, and love.

4. Community and Hospitality

Matariki and Puanga are deeply communal events. In pre-colonial times, Matariki was celebrated with feasting, music, and hospitality, as communities came together to share their harvest and strengthen relationships.

The Methodist tradition of open table fellowship—where all are welcome—is echoed in these gatherings. It's a time when we can live out Christ's commandment to love one another, to share generously, and to deepen our communal bonds.

Integrating Matariki and Puanga into Church Life

For churches in Aotearoa New Zealand, observing Matariki or Puanga is an opportunity to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) and to stand in partnership with Māori. It allows us to appreciate the spiritual wisdom embedded in indigenous knowledge and celebrate a uniquely Aotearoa expression of faith.

Conclusion: A Christian Embrace of Matariki and Puanga

As followers of Christ in Aotearoa, we are uniquely placed to walk in step with both our faith and the cultural heartbeat of the land we call home. Matariki and Puanga are not just cultural events—they are spiritual invitations.

They call us to look up—to the stars, to the heavens, to God. They invite us to look back in gratitude and mourning, to look around in community and generosity, and to look ahead with vision and hope.

May this Matariki season be a time of deepening our faith, celebrating our shared humanity, and living with renewed purpose in Christ.