

CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA

Newsletter July 2026

From the National Chair

Winter has a way of slowing us down.

The trees stand bare, the mornings ask us to linger a little longer, and the earth appears quiet. Yet we know winter is never empty. Beneath the surface, roots continue their hidden work. Seeds wait with quiet confidence. Life gathers itself for what is yet to come.

As I look across CSD I sense a gentle movement beneath what might first appear still. Our Reference Group has begun the important work of reviewing our Constitution. Not simply changing words, but listening for how our structures might better serve the life that is emerging amongst us.

We also warmly welcome Didier as our new Communications Coordinator. He brings a wealth of professional skill and experience, but perhaps even more importantly, a genuine connection to the heart of our ministry and our community. I have no doubt his presence will help us imagine new possibilities for how we connect with one another and the wider sector.

Across our formation providers there has also been movement. We acknowledge with gratitude those who have completed their service, carrying with them years of wisdom and faithful accompaniment. At the same time, new leaders and new expressions are emerging. Such is the rhythm of every living community, honouring what has been while making space for what is becoming.

As the months ahead unfold, many opportunities for professional development and formation invite us to continue to grow together. Each gathering is more than an event, it is another opportunity to deepen our practice, strengthen our community, and remain attentive to the movements of the Spirit in our own lives and in those we accompany.

Winter reminds us that transformation is often quiet. It asks us to trust what cannot yet be seen, to notice the small signs of life, and to believe that even in seasons of stillness, God is already preparing something new.

May this winter be a season of attentive hearts, gentle hope and quiet explorations..

With every blessing in your ministry
Karen Englebreetsen
National Chair



CSD Australia News

Change in Communications Coordinator - Welcome Didier to the Team

It is with great joy that we warmly welcome Didier to our CSD Australia community and team. Our previous Communications Coordinator, Ring, recently stepped away from the role due to the demands of her social work studies. We remain deeply grateful for her contribution over the few months she was present to CSD Australia and wish her every success as she completes her degree.

We are delighted that Didier has joined us and has already begun supporting our communications work. We look forward to the gifts, skills and enthusiasm he brings to our community and know many of you will have the opportunity to connect with him in the months ahead.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to [Didier](#) who will be receiving all your emails at communications@cздаustralia.com

Membership Renewal is Now Underway

On 1st July we commenced our annual membership renewal process. Thank you to everyone who has already renewed their membership and continued their commitment to our CSD Australia community.

We hope the renewal process is straightforward and accessible through our online form ([available here](#)). Once your renewal and payment have been received, your membership certificate and invoice will be issued.



If you would prefer a paper copy of the renewal form, or if you experience any difficulties with the process, please contact [Karen](#). Whether you need clarification, support, or simply wish to discuss your membership options, we are here to assist.

Reflections Magazine Submissions

It's that time of year again as we begin creating our CSD Reflections Magazine. This is a chance to share reflections and wisdom with each other. Our CSD Reflection Magazine is only circulated to members, not published on any platforms or media.

This year's theme is **"Shared Humanity"**

We warmly invite all members to contribute, whether through a reflection, poem, artwork, photography, book review, or even a movie review, anything is welcomed. Share with us whatever speaks to you of *Shared Humanity*.



Submissions close: Sunday 27th September 2026

Magazine Release: October

You can submit [here](#) or by emailing [Didier](#).

CSD Australia Members

Voice of New Members

Fiona Ross

My formation as an Ignatian spiritual director was through the Epiphany Group in Scotland. I've joined CSD with a desire to connect with the community of spiritual directors here in Australia, and to continue growing in my practice through ongoing formation and professional development. I am currently training to give the Spiritual Exercises with Kardia Formation. My work as a deep coach, voice facilitator, and sound therapist underpins my embodied approach to spiritual accompaniment.



Profile of a Member

Gail Paxman

My first ever silent retreat had a spiritual direction component, it was a weekend that was to change my life. Before then I had not heard of spiritual direction, by the end of that year, 2017, my life had taken a new direction and I moved into a career of pastoral care and spiritual direction. Coming from a science background and leading a life of busy-ness, logic and perfectionism, my move into a contemplative space held many challenges. As I have learnt and grown I have come to love holding space and listening deeply to another person, it is very special to be trusted in this way. My spiritual direction formation was undertaken through the Siloam program at the Heart of Life Centre, I have a Masters in Spiritual Direction, and am a Giver of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises.



Favourite Scripture:

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls..." Jeremiah 6:16

Favourite Book:

Lord of the Rings - I first read these books in year 10 and have re-read them every couple of years since. The characters have accompanied me through many aspects of my life. I now have my Nana's boxed set to read which makes it even more special

Favourite Movie:

Strictly Ballroom

Memorable Moment:

In late high school I did the Difficult Range Youth Challenge Hike, a weekend bushwalk for teenagers in the Wimmera. I recall the (very!) steep climb to the summit of Mount Difficult that opened out into a magnificent view of the northern end of the Grampians. We shared a massive high in reaching the top after an arduous ascent and what a panorama there was to enjoy. Sadly I did not carry a camera on the hike so there are no photos to celebrate this moment.

CSD Australia Professional Development

There is no cost or need for members to book. A zoom link will be sent to all members in the preceding week. If you would like a friend to join, who is a non member - please see the trybooking link below or on our website for upcoming PD.

Moral Injury guided by Jesse Winter

Saturday August 1st 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

Join us for an amazing morning dwelling on a topic that is progressive in research and the pastoral field. Critical for all spiritual directors to have a basic understanding. Moral injury is a significant concern across contexts and has features beyond typical trauma, such as loss of meaning, guilt, and unforgiveness. This reveals the limits of purely event-based trauma models. This presentation introduces a new framework for understanding moral injury through the lens of spiritual health, offering practice-ready prevention and intervention strategies for managing it.



Jesse Winter is a Chaplain with Fire Rescue Victoria and a psychologist. As an Emergency Services Foundation scholarship recipient (2024) he researched how chaplaincy and psychology can address moral injury within emergency services. Jesse's post-graduate studies in theology and clinical psychology and professional expertise in Chaplaincy & Mental health lays a foundation for his research and reporting on interventions for populations experiencing potentially morally injurious events.

For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register [here](#).

“Dear Gød Claude” guided by Clare Shearman

Saturday September 12th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly shaping the way we live, communicate, and engage with the world. As these conversations continue to unfold, including the recent reflections of Pope Leo XIV, they also invite us to consider the opportunities, questions, and challenges AI presents for the ministry of spiritual direction.

Join us for a thought provoking morning with Clare guiding us through exploration, conversation, and shared reflection. Together, we will consider how spiritual directors might faithfully engage with these emerging realities, remaining grounded in presence, discernment, and the sacredness of the human encounter.



Clare Shearman (introduced to Claude in late 2025), a spiritual director and professional supervisor who runs The Cliffs Retreat in Shoreham Victoria with her husband Artie.

For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register [here](#).

Sharing the gift of Spiritual Companionship guided by CSD Team

Saturday November 7th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

The CSD Australia team warmly invites you to a simple, informal online gathering for connection, reflection and mutual encouragement.

As another year of ministry draws towards a close, we pause to acknowledge the many experiences, encounters, questions, and moments of grace that have shaped our journeys. Together, we will create a space to reflect with gratitude on the year that has been, to notice where we have been nourished and challenged, and to celebrate the ways the Spirit continues to move within and among us.

The gathering is an opportunity to simply be together as a community of Spiritual Directors. Whether this year has felt fruitful, demanding, surprising or transformative, we hope you will join us as we take time to listen, reflect, and give thanks.



2027 Professional Development Opportunities

As we begin planning our 2027 Professional Development program, we warmly invite your input.

What topics, questions, or areas of practice within spiritual direction would you value exploring more deeply? Are there emerging issues, aspects of ministry, or areas of formation that you would like to learn more about or engage with in conversation?

Your insights help shape your Professional Development program that is relevant, enriching, and responsive to the needs in our community. While we continue to seek presenters who can support these conversations, we are especially interested in hearing about the topics and themes that matter most to you.



If there is an area you would like us to consider for a future session, please reach out to [Didier](#) or [Karen](#). We welcome your ideas and look forward to learning what would best support you in your ministry and ongoing formation.

Book Review

The Spiritual Director: Practising the Charism of Presence and Attention

by Julia Mourant

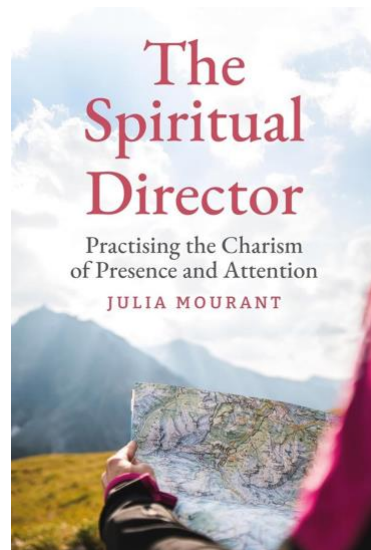
A Book That Turns Its Gaze Towards the Director

There are books that teach us *how* to be spiritual directors. There are books that offer models, theories, frameworks, and practical wisdom. Then there are books that gently turn the question around and ask:

Who is the person offering this ministry?

Julia Mourant's *The Spiritual Director: Practising the Charism of Presence and Attention* is one such book.

Rather than adding another layer of knowledge to master, Mourant invites us into a deeper exploration of the interior life from which spiritual direction flows. This is not a book primarily concerned with methods or techniques. Instead, it explores the qualities of presence, attentiveness, humility, and receptivity that sit at the heart of the ministry.



For those new to spiritual direction, the book offers a rich introduction to the ministry and disposition of the director. Yet perhaps its greatest gift is for those who have accompanied others for many years.

After years of listening, holding stories, discerning movements of Spirit, and creating sacred space for others, it can be easy to focus on the ministry itself and less on the one who ministers. Mourant gently invites experienced directors to return to the source, to revisit the questions that first called them into this work and to reflect on how the ministry continues to shape them.

This is a book for the heart as much as the head.

It reminds us that spiritual direction is not simply something we do. It is a way of being present to God, to another person, and to ourselves. In a culture often focused on outcomes and expertise, Mourant's invitation is both refreshing and timely: to cultivate the charism of presence and attention, and to trust that this may be one of the greatest gifts we offer.

Perhaps the question this book leaves us with is not, "*How can I become a better spiritual director?*" but rather,

"How is the ministry of spiritual direction continuing to form me?"

Other News

Conference for ANSD - Australian Network for Spiritual Direction 18 -20 September 2026

The 2026 Conference is in NSW at The Hermitage.

Unearth the wisdom in the room through listening, conversation and creativity. Three input sessions will comprise panels in which representative members of the network delve into questions about spiritual direction in this time and place such as 'What is emerging in the spiritual direction world?'. 'How can spiritual direction be a communal space?' and 'How is spiritual direction prophetic?' Add to the wisdom in the room through your presence and engagement in small group conversations, artmaking, and connections created by the retreat space.

Woven through the weekend will be music of artist-in-residence John Coleman. The days will include opportunities to help John craft song inspired by our experiences of the ANSD community.

[For more information](#)



Upcoming Retreat Opportunities

Contemplatio - Apophatic Prayer and the Awakening of the Apophatic Self

Tuesday 11th and Wednesday 12th August 2026

Santa Casa Spirituality Centre, Queenscliff, Victoria and Online

This course is led by Kerrie Hide for spiritual directors and people interested in contemplation. Attention will be given to how spiritual directors may be naturally at home with apophatic language and create an atmosphere in the spiritual direction encounter that enables apophatic knowing to arise into conscious awareness without limiting its ongoing revelatory power. We will continue to awaken new sensitivities to the endless possibilities how the Spirit opens us to unitive participatory love knowing. Emphasis is on claiming the ontological space of contemplation and nurturing the oneing heart awareness that arises in stillness and silence.

[For more information](#)



Santa Casa's 40 day Sabbatical Program

19th September - 30 October 2026

A few spots left! This is a sacred time for you to stop, rest, explore, reflect, be nourished and emerge anew. A balanced timetable of input, personal reflection, free days and electives.

[For more information](#)



Professional Development Opportunities

Heart of Life

Returning to the Heart: Contemplative Refresher Course for Spiritual Directors

Facilitated by Apryl Huglin, Leslie Hanger, and Kathleen Ward

In Person - Monday to Wednesday 21, 22, 23 September, 9am – 4pm

Over three transformative days we invite spiritual directors to step away from daily demands and immerse themselves in renewal and deepening practice.

Sacred Presence in Wounded Places: Trauma-Informed Spiritual Direction

Friday 24 July 2026, 9am – 4.30pm, in-person at Heart of Life Centre

Facilitated by Apryl Huglin

Enhance your spiritual direction ministry with trauma-informed care. Join us for “Sacred Presence in Wounded Places,” a comprehensive professional development day designed specifically for spiritual directors. Learn to recognize trauma and its impact on spiritual life and create genuinely safe sacred spaces.

[For more information](#)

Kardia

Memory to Meaning: Spiritual Storytelling in the Context of Global Upheaval with Margaret Silf

8th October - 11th November 2026

We are delighted to offer this new reflective retreat with renowned author Margaret Silf. This retreat is designed to engage the kardia—bringing together head and heart—and will be guided by Margaret’s deep wisdom and experience. A widely respected spiritual explorer, Margaret travels extensively, accompanying fellow pilgrims through her writing and the retreats she leads.

Each week, participants will gather online on Wednesday evenings with Margaret Silf at 7.00 pm (AEDT), where she will offer guidance and reflections to support engagement with personal story and spiritual journey. Retreatants will also be invited to join a weekly small sharing group meeting which will run for one to one-and-a-half hours, facilitated by a trained spiritual director.

[For more information](#)

