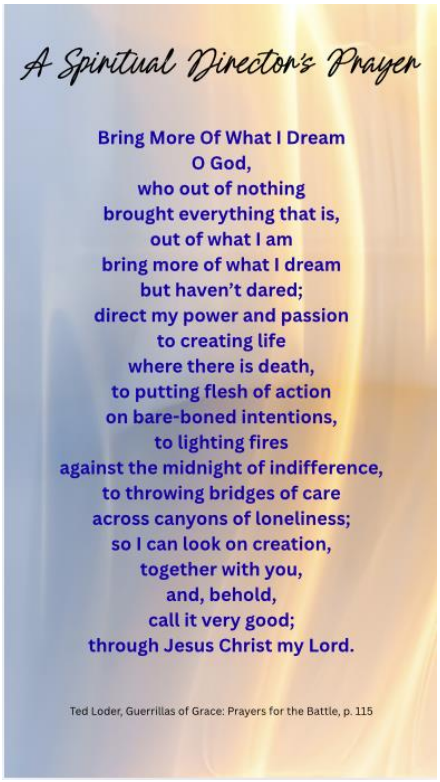
CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA
Newsletter November 2026

# From the National Chair

## Making Space for What Might Be

As the year slowly draws to a close, perhaps this is a moment to pause, to acknowledge all that has unfolded, the moments that have shaped us, the connections that have sustained us, and the possibilities that are still finding their way into being.

Recently, during group supervision, we opened with 'A Spiritual Director's Prayer'. Its words stayed with me, particularly the invitation to bring more of what we dream, but have not yet dared. It is a gentle reminder that possibility often begins quietly, as a thought, a hope, or a longing for something more. Nurtured through the art of spiritual direction to come into being.




Throughout the year, we have continued to witness the richness of our shared humanity through connections, the stories we hold, and the wisdom we share. Our recent Reflection Magazine offered a glimpse into this sacred common ground, reminding us of the many ways our lives and ministries intersect. Through our professional development gatherings we have also created space to learn from one another, deepen our understanding, and draw upon the collective wisdom and insight within our community. And with another wonderful programme taking shape for next year, there is much to look forward to.

May we carry forward what has nourished us, remain open to what is yet to emerge, and find the courage to give life to the dreams and possibilities that call to us. Perhaps the invitation is not to have all the answers, but to keep making space for one another, for new insights, and for the unexpected gifts that may unfold when we gather.

Who knows what might unfold when we dare to dream a little more?

With every blessing in your ministry
Karen Englebretsen
National Chair

# CSD Australia News

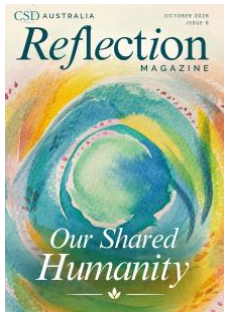
## Thanks to Communication Coordinator Didier Lecordier

Our Communications Coordinator, Didier Lecordier, has decided to conclude his role with CSD Australia. Since joining the team in July, Didier has contributed to our communications and the ongoing development of our website.
We extend our sincere thanks to Didier for his time, contribution and the work he has offered to our community. We wish him every blessing as he moves into this next chapter, with warm wishes for whatever possibilities and pathways may unfold for him. .

## Membership Renewal - Completed

With our annual membership renewal now complete, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to each of you for your patience, prompt responses and engagement throughout the process. It was a great opportunity for me, Karen, to connect with each of you, even if only briefly and online.
I hope the coming year in CSD brings opportunities for connection, engagement in professional development, and time to connect with one another as a community.
Please reach out if you need support of any kind, or if you have a suggestion, idea or spark of inspiration that you think the wider CSD community might benefit from. We would love to hear from you.

## Reflection Magazine Out Now




Our annual Reflection Magazine is now released. Thank you to the CSD Australia members' who have generously shared about *Our Shared Humanity*. Some comments from members:

"I enjoyed every bit of it. It's like a prism shining out different living aspects in our world. Blessings for all in our ministries."
"How attractive is the cover – certainly is inviting!"

Please note: Our annual magazine is not published in hard copy or online, rather delivered to your inbox. For those who have not received please reach out for us to forward on a copy.

## Working with Children / Vulnerable Adult Check

Thank you to everyone who has responded so promptly to our request for Working with Children Checks. We greatly appreciate your assistance and cooperation. Our records are now nearly up to date, with just a few members yet to respond. This process has also provided an opportunity to review and streamline our information-gathering procedures, with the aim of reducing administrative tasks for all our members wherever possible.
Thank you for your patience, understanding and ongoing cooperation as we work towards making these processes as simple and efficient as possible for everyone.

## Melbourne in Person Gatherings 2027

For Melbourne members, in-person gathering dates are listed below. In 2027 we will have two locations and different days. Opening up the possibility for more to have a chance to gather, connect with other spiritual directors, exchange conversation and share in a cuppa. Ideally these groups will be self run with the support from the CSD team.

**City Monday Gathering Dates**
Location - St Francis Eymard Centre, 326 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne Central.
Time - 1.30pm - 3.30pm
Dates - 22 February 2027
14 June 2027
18 October 2027

**Croydon Gathering Dates**
Location - Heart of Life Spirituality Centre, 69 Alto Avenue, Croydon
In 2027, we will be offering three gatherings in Croydon, scheduled on a day other than Monday. This is an opportunity for members who live on this side of Melbourne, as well as those who are unable to attend on a Monday, to come together.

Apologies that these dates are not yet confirmed. I will send a separate email to all Melbourne members in the coming weeks with the confirmed dates, allowing you to add them to your calendars well in advance.

## Be Part of the Conversation: Join Our Reference Team

Do you have a few hours to spare every three months to connect online, share ideas and be part of the ongoing life of CSD Australia?
We warmly invite members to join our Reference Team, a space where member voices, wisdom and experience can help shape our shared journey.

**What is the Reference Team?**
Our Constitution describes the Reference Team as a group of voluntary members appointed by the Chair to offer support and accountability to the Chair in carrying out their role, while providing a point of connection with the wider membership.

In practice, it is an opportunity to come together three times a year, with occasional email communication between gatherings, to share in what is happening across CSD Australia, offer reflections, ideas and support the ongoing growth and development of our community.
These are informal conversations, grounded in a spirit of mutual support, shared wisdom and a commitment to ensuring that the voices of our members remain part of the journey.

**Would you like to be involved?**
If you are interested in contributing your perspective, sharing your insights and helping nurture the future of CSD Australia, we would love to hear from you.
Please reach out to Karen to find out more.

## Group Insurance

As previously advised, we are continuing discussions with Fenton Green Insurance regarding the possibility of securing a group policy for our members. We remain hopeful that these discussions will result in insurance being available again at a reasonable cost.
While the process is taking a little longer than anticipated, discussions are ongoing, and we will keep members informed of any developments and available options as soon as further information becomes available.
Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

## CSD Representative to AECSD

We are seeking a member to represent us on the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD)

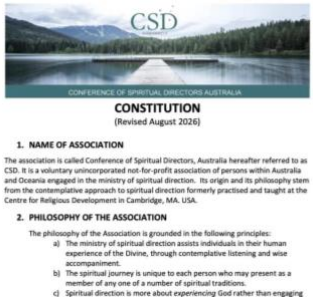
AECSD supports the flourishing of contemplative spiritual direction across Australia. It brings together spiritual direction associations and formation programs, promotes ethical practice and accountability, and supports the recognition of formation programs.

This is a valuable opportunity to bring CSD Australia's voice to the wider spiritual direction community, while contributing to conversation, connection and collaboration across the sector.

If this sounds like something that you are interested in doing, or would like to know more, please contact Karen.

## CSD Constitution

The CSD Reference Group recently came together to review and update our Constitution.
A constitution is the guiding document for an organisation. It sets out our purpose, how we are governed, how decisions are made, and the rights and responsibilities of members.


CSD

CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA

**CONSTITUTION**

(Revised August 2026)

**1. NAME OF ASSOCIATION**

The association is called Conference of Spiritual Directors, Australia hereafter referred to as CSD. It is a voluntary unincorporated not-for-profit association of persons within Australia and Oceania engaged in the ministry of spiritual direction. Its origin and its philosophy stem from the contemplative approach to spiritual direction formerly practised and taught at the Centre for Religious Development in Cambridge, MA. USA.

**2. PHILOSOPHY OF THE ASSOCIATION**

The philosophy of the Association is grounded in the following principles:

a) The ministry of spiritual direction assists individuals in their human experience of the Divine, through contemplative listening and wise accompaniment.
b) The spiritual journey is unique to each person who may present as a member of any one of a number of spiritual traditions.
c) Spiritual direction is more about experiencing God rather than engaging

It is an important foundation for the life and future of CSD Australia. We warmly invite all members to read the updated Constitution and become familiar with the framework that supports our shared work and community.

The document is available here. If you have any questions or feedback please get in touch.

# 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 Professional Developments.

## Self Compassion and Spiritual direction guided by Andor Vince

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

Self-criticism, shame, perfectionism, disappointment, and spiritual struggle are familiar themes in spiritual direction conversations. Self-compassion can play an important role in how these experiences are held and understood, raising an important question: how might spiritual directors nurture self-compassion in directees while remaining faithful to the distinctive practice of spiritual direction?

Drawing on insights from positive psychology and Christian spirituality, this workshop combines reflection, discussion, case studies, and a practical framework for exploring that question.

**Andor Vince** brings a wealth of experience as a spiritual director and Positive Organisational Psychologist. Andor's current work explores how insights from positive psychology may contribute to spiritual accompaniment while remaining grounded in the principles and practices of spiritual direction.

For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register here.

## Save the Dates for 2027

We're excited to release the first half of our 2027 Professional Development dates so you can get them into your calendars early! We're still working on confirming the dates for the second half of the year and will share these with you as soon as they are finalised.

Keep an eye on the website and future newsletters, and we'll also send an email to all members when new dates are available.

All Professional Development sessions are held on Saturday mornings, 9.30–11.00am (AEDT). We warmly invite all members to join us, participate in the conversation and make the most of these opportunities for learning and connection. A session link will be sent by email during the week of each Professional Development.

Not a member? You're very welcome too! Each session will have a registration link for those who would like to join.

*To help us maintain a safe and welcoming environment for everyone attending, we kindly ask members not to share their member session link with others. Non-members are very welcome to register through the appropriate link or reach out to Karen.*

# CSD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2027

## The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul guided by Connie Zweig

Saturday February 13th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

Connie Zweig has expressed willingness to come join our CSD PD in 2027, leading a workshop touching on her book. Let's heed Carl Jung's warning: Whoever carries over into the afternoon of life the law of the morning must pay for it with damage to the soul. This webinar teaches you how to shift your identity from midlife Hero to wise Elder, or from role (what we do) to soul (who we truly are). It explores how to move through late life as a rite of passage, releasing past forms, facing the unknown, and emerging renewed as an Elder. You can deepen your self-knowledge and eventually shift from denial to awareness, self-rejection to self acceptance, obligation to flow, and distraction to presence. This is the deeper dimension of age, the universal journey of individuation, even the unfolding of advanced stages of human development, which are described in every spiritual tradition as the purpose of late life.

**Connie Zweig, Ph.D**. is a retired Jungian therapist and author of Meeting the Shadow and Romancing the Shadow. Her award-winning book, The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul, extends Shadow-work into midlife and beyond and explores aging as a spiritual practice. Her book, Meeting the Shadow on the Spiritual Path: The Dance of Darkness and Light in Our Search for Awakening, extends shadow-work into religion and spirituality. Her podcast, Dr. Neil's Spiritual Awakening to Non-Duality, can be accessed here. Along with livestreams and new writings found here. Plus her website for more information.

For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register here.

## Part II Moral Injury guided by Jesse Winters

Saturday April 10th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

Part Two moves beyond understanding what moral injury is to focus on what we can actually do when sitting with someone carrying it. This practical session will explore the interventions available, what the evidence supports, including spiritual approaches, and where to access relevant training. We'll consider what different approaches have in common, how to recognise moral injury and distinguish it from experience such as grief, and the particular challenges involved in working with guilt. Rather than relying on reassurance that may unintentionally bypass someone's experience, we'll explore ways to accompany moral injury with greater care, confidence and discernment.

Following **Jesse Winter**'s earlier PD with us, we're pleased to welcome him back for a deeper exploration of moral injury and the ways we might respond to it in practice. Jesse is a psychologist and Chaplain with Fire Rescue Victoria. As a 2024 Emergency Services Foundation scholarship recipient, Jesse researched how chaplaincy and psychology can work together to address moral injury within emergency services, particularly for people who have experienced potentially morally injurious events.

For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register here.

## Spiritual Health guided by Rev Chris Pretorius

Saturday May 15th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

In his doctoral research, Rev. Chris Pretorius explores spiritual health as something we can learn to recognise, attend to and nurture, not simply when someone is struggling, but across the seasons of their life. His research invites us to consider four relationships that shape spiritual wellbeing: our relationship with God, with our true Christlike self, with others, and with our environment. In this session, Chris will move beyond the theory and into the practice of accompaniment: how we can help people identify patterns, notice shifts and name what may be happening in their spiritual lives over an extended period. What might we begin to notice if, rather than asking only *"How are you going?"*, we learned to ask better questions, listen for patterns, and gently attend to the signs of spiritual wellbeing and spiritual distress?

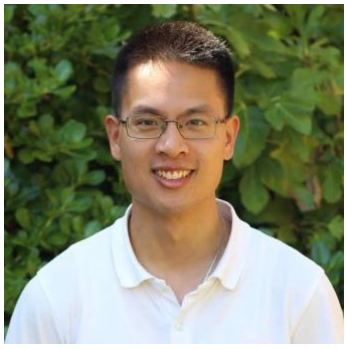
**Rev. Chris Pretorius** is the Senior Pastor of Wonga Park Christian Reformed Church and a doctoral candidate at the Australian College of Theology, based at Melbourne School of Theology. Chris has a background in science, computer science and theology, and has a particular interest in spiritual health, Christian leadership and the relationship between faith, theology and technology. He is passionate about supporting the spiritual health and wellbeing of Christian leaders and brings together his experience as a pastor, theologian and researcher in his work. Chris is also the author of *Living the Word: Hebrews*, a devotional exploring the book of Hebrews and what it means to live out faith in everyday life.

For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register here.

## The power of Story, Imagination and Art in Spiritual Direction guided by Lawerence Kai

Saturday June 5th 9.30am - 11.00am (AEDT)

Stories have a way of reaching places that conversation sometimes cannot. A familiar fairytale can suddenly feel strangely personal; an image can stir something we did not know was there. A character's journey can begin to illuminate our own. In this session, Lawrence will explore how stories, imagination and can become rich resources within spiritual direction, inviting directees not simply to think about a story or image, but to enter into it and notice what emerges. Drawing on his Masters of Theology and his ongoing exploration of Christian spirituality through story, myth and culture. Lawrence will offer practical ways of working creatively with the imagination in spiritual direction.



**Lawrence Kai** is a spiritual director, retreat director and life coach. Along with being the founder of Shepherd's Heart. Based in Melbourne, Lawrence brings together his experience in spirituality, theology, pastoral ministry and life coaching. He has a particular interest in helping people deepen their spiritual lives, navigate times of transition and discern their sense of calling. His approach draws on Ignatian and Carmelite spirituality, as well as psychology and the wisdom of the Christian tradition. Lawrence is also a speaker, retreat facilitator and creator of The Myth Pilgrim podcast, where he explores faith and spirituality through stories, myths and popular culture.

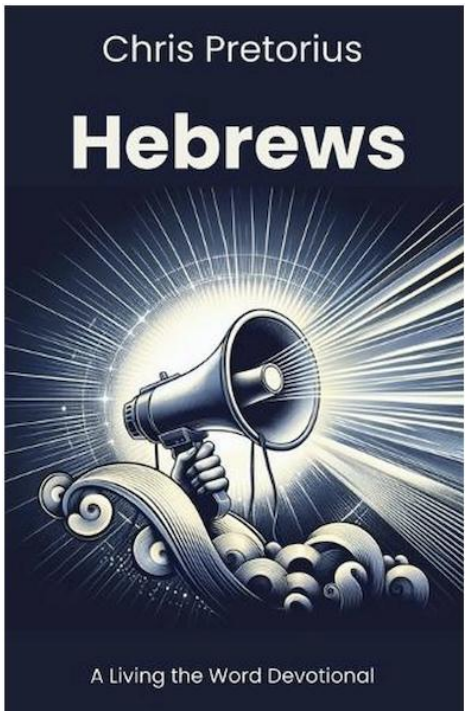
For non-members who wish to join the session, you are most welcome simply register here.

# Book Review

## Hebrews

by Chris Pretorius

There are some books of the Bible that seem to ask us to slow down. *Hebrews* is one of them. Rich in imagery and encouragement, it speaks of Christ, faith, perseverance, hope and the mysterious ways in which God draws near. Yet it can also feel like difficult territory to navigate.




Chris Pretorius' *Hebrews*, part of the *Living the Word* series, offers a companionable way into this complex book of Scripture. Published in 2024, the book works passage by passage through Hebrews, seeking to bring its ancient words into conversation with everyday faith. Each reflection includes Scripture, an accessible meditation, prayer and a spiritual challenge.

For spiritual directors, there is something particularly interesting about this approach. The book invites us not simply to understand Hebrews, but to allow Scripture to become something we live with. This is close to the heart of spiritual direction, creating space for the person before us to notice what is happening within them, to listen more deeply, and to recognise where God may already be present.

Pretorius writes in an accessible and conversational style. His reflections frequently take an everyday image or experience and use it as a doorway into the biblical text. In the opening reflection, for example, he imagines the difference between receiving letters from someone and eventually having that person arrive in person. It becomes a way of opening up Hebrews' profound claim that God has spoken to us through the Son.

It is this movement, from Scripture into lived experience, that makes the book potentially useful for spiritual directors. Hebrews repeatedly speaks of paying attention, persevering, drawing near, not drifting, and keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. These are deeply resonant themes for anyone accompanying another person on their spiritual journey.

The notion of spiritual drifting particularly caught my attention. Hebrews warns us about neglecting what we have heard. Pretorius uses the image of a ship gradually moving off course. For those engaged in spiritual direction, this raises an interesting question: *What happens when we stop paying attention to the movements of our inner life?* Spiritual drifting does not necessarily announce itself dramatically. Sometimes it may look like busyness, disconnection, discouragement, or simply losing sight of what once mattered deeply.

This is perhaps one of the gifts of Hebrews; it continually calls the reader back to attention.

# Other News

## Heart of Life

Applications now accepted for 2027 formation programs.

Siloam Program: Full or Part time in-person or online program for the formation of spiritual directors.

Emmaus Supervision Program: Part time, in-person or online program for the formation of professional supervisors.

Damascus Spiritual Leaders Program: Part-time, in-person or online program for the formation of spiritual leaders.

Let the Heart Listen Program: Part time, in-person or online formation program for people involved in listening to and supporting others in life's journey.

For more information

## WellSpring Centre

Art of Spiritual Companioning Formation Program

Applications are now open, taught over three years through a mix of in-person intensives held three times annually at WellSpring in Melbourne, and online sessions during semesters.

2027 dates:

Intensives:

11th – 13th March inclusive 9am-5pm

29th – 31st July inclusive 9am-5pm

28th – 30th October inclusive 9am-5pm

Online Sessions (First Year Wed afternoons 10/ semester)

Semester 1: w/c 15th March; 5th April - w/c 31st May

Semester 2: w/c 2nd August - w/c 13th September;

w/c 4th October - w/c 18th October.

For more information

## St Francis College

Professional Supervision for Spiritual Directors

This course is intended to train people to work as:

Clinical Supervisors of counsellors, therapists, social workers, youth and community workers. Pastoral supervisors of clergy, church workers and pastoral carers. Supervisors of pastoral care workers in hospitals and aged care facilities.

Supervisors of students in training.

This course will also allow for:

Supervisors to upgrade their skills and knowledge

Individuals to qualify for membership of professional supervision associations.

For more information

## Embracing Summer Retreat

November 11th - November 14th 2026

The Embracing Summer Retreat is an event over two occasions. First, an online meeting on Wednesday, then an all day event on Saturday. The Saturday event begins and ends online but occurs in a location of your choice. There will be readings and reflections and opportunities to share your experience.

For more information

## Contemplato

Loving in Abiding Silence

*Monday 5 July - Friday 9 July 2027*

A five day online directed silent retreat. This intimate silent retreat invites us into a loving that opens into sheer silence. Grounded in abiding oneing, we will enter the silence of the divine heart, the hidden womb of Love from whom all life is born. You may make the retreat in your own home or withdraw to a beautiful, quiet place that nourishes your prayers. Apart from our morning gathering and individual spiritual direction, the days will be held in contemplative silence.

For more information

## From Ermos Institute:

### Intensive Journal Workshop : Our lives are vast, multifaceted and profound

EREMOS
EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY IN AUSTRALIA

Intensive Journal workshops hosted by the Eremos Institute are offered online and in person. The Intensive Journal helps connect us with this vastness and depth by engaging the process created by Dr Ira Progoff.

See upcoming workshops, including our newest offering, *Introducing the Intensive Journal*, a 3 hour online workshop here.

For more information