

# Newsletter

## Centre for Contemplative Spirituality

### September 2026

---

#### Listening Together

Why are the roots of spiritual direction so deeply grounded in contemplative spirituality?

Perhaps because spiritual direction is not primarily about telling someone what God's will is, but about listening attentively with another person for how God is already present and at work in their life.

This requires a particular kind of presence.

Contemplation is not simply a technique of meditation or a particular way of praying. It's how you live your life in general. It is a way of being present: a willingness not to immediately explain, fix, control, or judge, but to become quiet enough to truly see and hear.

And that is precisely the posture a spiritual director needs.

When someone sits before us and speaks about their life, there is a strong temptation to think: *I know what is happening here. I know what this person needs to do. I have a good question that will move this conversation in the right direction.*

The contemplative director listens differently: *What is happening here? What is asking to be heard? Where is there movement? Where might the Spirit be drawing us?*

Because God is already there. We are the ones second on the scene.

The director does not bring God into the conversation. Nor do we need to build someone's relationship with God for them. God is already present in this person's life - often in places they have not yet recognised or even considered.

The director is therefore less a spiritual expert who provides answers and more a witness to God's presence.

Contemplative spirituality also reminds us that the deepest movement within a person is not always visible on the surface. Someone might say, "I am angry with God." Rather than immediately addressing the anger, the contemplative listener may wonder: *What lies beneath it? What is this anger protecting? What longing is hidden within it?*

Or someone says, “I don’t know what I believe anymore.” There can be space for the uncertainty itself. Perhaps the loss of certainty is not the loss of God.

This requires trust: trust that truth can reveal itself when there is enough space for it.

The impression might be created that God is so central to this conversation and process that the director is actually superfluous. Not so. Spiritual direction is a dance of three – God, directee, director. God longs for the presence and input of the director. As an important dance partner the director must also be formed contemplatively. If I am anxious, I will try to control the conversation. If I need to feel useful, I will give advice. If I am afraid of silence, I will keep asking questions.

But as I learn to sit in God’s presence without needing to produce anything, that posture begins to shape the way I accompany another person.

Perhaps it can be said simply:

**Contemplation teaches us to be present. Presence teaches us to listen. And listening becomes the ground of spiritual direction.**

We do not know beforehand where God will take the conversation. You do not know. I do not know.

But together we can become quiet enough to notice what is already there, and what is stirring.

Contemplation teaches us not only to seek God, but to become attentive enough to recognise God where God already is.

And spiritual direction is that attentiveness — shared with another person.



## **Streamlining our Companion Accreditation for 2027**

Dear Companions and Alumni,

As the Centre for Contemplative Spirituality has grown over the years, we have been reflecting on what it means to remain a companion after completing the formation journey.

We don’t want accreditation to become simply an annual administrative requirement — something that is renewed, a fee is paid and then forgotten about for another year. Spiritual companionship is a living vocation. It asks of us that we ourselves continue to be accompanied, continue to make space for silence, continue to learn and deepen, and remain connected to the community in which our own formation took place.

For 2027, we are therefore streamlining our accreditation process and placing greater emphasis on continuing formation and connection.

## **Two Ways of Belonging**

The Centre is introducing two ways of belonging: Alumni and Accredited Companions. Everyone currently on the Centre's list will be contacted individually and invited to choose which of these two categories best describes how they wish to remain connected to the Centre. Marina and Nicolin are coordinating this process and will contact everyone before the end of October 2026. The choice will determine the appropriate website listing.

### **Alumni**

Alumni are people who have successfully completed the Centre's formation course but are not currently choosing to practise as spiritual companions through the Centre. However, they remain part of the story and history of this community.

Alumni pay R200 per year as membership of the Centre. Alumni membership does not carry the accreditation requirements set out below.

Alumni remain very much part of the Centre's community.

The annual Rooting and Refreshing Day is our shared get-together day. It offers continuing personal formation and nourishment, and we look forward to seeing everyone, both Alumni and Accredited companions, at this event.

### **Accredited Companions**

Accredited Companions are those who are actively practising as spiritual companions and wish to be listed in the Centre's public directory. Accreditation is renewed annually.

To be accredited and listed in the Accredited Companions Directory, companions will:

- Participate in personal Spiritual Direction — at least 6 sessions per year.
- Attend a silent retreat — at least 3 nights per year.

These are not simply requirements for remaining on a list. They are practices that help us remain grounded in the same contemplative life from which we accompany others.

Accredited companions also pay R200 per year as membership of the Centre with the added formation requirements stated above.

The Accredited Companions Directory will list those who are currently practising and choose to make themselves available to people seeking a spiritual

companion. Accredited companions renew their accreditation annually and may publish the biography and contact details they provide for this purpose.

The two choices are not about who is “in” or “out”. They make clear whether someone is currently offering spiritual companionship through the Centre or remains part of the wider community of people who have journeyed through formation with us.

### **A New Annual Rhythm**

We are moving the accreditation process from the middle of the year to the end of the year, creating a clearer and more natural annual rhythm.

Application window: 1 November 2026 – 31 January 2027

Accreditation period: February 2027 – January 2028

### **Continuing the Journey**

We hope that this new rhythm will help us to think of accreditation less as something we have to maintain and more as an opportunity to return — to the practices that sustain us, to the community that has shaped us, and to the contemplative ground from which we accompany others.

The work of spiritual companionship does not end when the formation course ends. In many ways, that is where another part of the journey begins.

We look forward to continuing that journey with you.



### **Rooting & Refreshing**

“Rekindling the Fire ”

Dear Centre for Contemplative Spirituality Alumni  
We invite you to our Rooting and Refreshing Day

on Tuesday, 3 November 2026  
from 9:00 tot 16:00  
at Ooskerk in Pretoria

Speakers on the topic of “Rekindling the fire”  
Fay van Eeden  
Barry van der Merwe

R220 (includes teatime snacks, lunch and all activities)  
Please register here before 23 October 2026:  
Link: <https://www.ooskerk.com/event-details/rekindling-the-fire>



## Echoes from the SD Groups

In the previous news letter we posted this invitation: *“The Centre is not just a place; it is an organic network pulsing wherever you are. To our Spiritual Direction groups who meet across the country: What is moving in your circles? Where is the silence catching fire? Please drop us a note and share what is noteworthy, alive, or shifting in your local groups. We want to celebrate and hold those spaces with you.”*

In response, **Adinda van Heerden**, sent us this beautiful reflection:

### **In Broken Grain: Becoming Bread for the World**

Some retreats leave you with pages of notes.

Others leave you with a quieter heart.

*In Broken Grain* was one of those rare experiences that cannot simply be described—it has to be lived.

Over three gentle winter days at iDwala Retreat Centre, Hermann Kuschke guided our small group of five through Scripture using the slow, ancient practice of baking sourdough bread. The process itself became our teacher. As “Matilda” the starter, flour, water, salt and time slowly transformed into bread, so too we found ourselves reflecting on God's patient work within our own lives.

Nothing felt hurried. Nothing needed to be achieved.

The retreat unfolded as a soft flow that engaged every one of my senses. Scripture was no longer something merely read or discussed; it became something touched, gently stretched, unfolded, waited for, broken and shared. Faith moved beyond words into an embodied experience.

What made the journey even richer was the companionship of fellow pilgrims. There is something profoundly healing about strangers becoming companions around a table where stories, silence and freshly baked bread are shared with equal reverence.

Our hostess, Heidi Kuschke, nourished us with extraordinary home-cooked meals prepared with such generosity and love that every meal became an extension of the retreat itself.

The setting played no small part in what unfolded.

iDwala, clothed in its quiet winter beauty, seemed to cradle every reflection. Walking the labyrinth helped anchor insights that had gently surfaced, leaving me with a deep stillness in the presence of God. The mountain hike, the abundant birdlife, and the ever-changing moods of the dam continually invited me to slow down and notice. Even the night sky became a place of prayer—a breathtaking canopy so filled with stars they felt almost within reach, each one reminding me of the vastness and tenderness of God's presence.

For me, iDwala has become a place of remembering.

A place where creation gently restores perspective.

A place where God is encountered not through spectacle, but through simplicity.

A place that feels like coming home.

As Spiritual Directors we often accompany others into deeper awareness of God's presence. Yet we, too, need spaces where we are accompanied—where our souls can soften, our senses awaken, and we can simply receive.

*In Broken Grain* offered exactly that.

If you find yourself longing for a retreat where Scripture is experienced rather than merely studied, where silence is spacious, where bread becomes sacrament, and where God is encountered through the ordinary rhythms of creation, I can wholeheartedly recommend this retreat.

Perhaps, in allowing ourselves to be taken, blessed, broken and shared, we discover again what it means to become bread for the world.

*Transformation rarely arrives through striving. More often it comes quietly, through attending—to the dough beneath our hands, the silence within our hearts, the stories we carry, and the God who has been present all along.*



## **The Emmaus pilgrims: On our way through books**

This book discussion group finished its pilgrimage through a first book and we learnt valuable lessons:

- Our goal is to share at a personal level, what we learn through the reading of the book, how we grow, and how we journey with God.
- Our community is important to us, therefore we aim to make space for each one in the group to bring their contribution and to be heard.
- We discuss one chapter or section at a time. We are in no rush to get through a book.

We have started **a new book journey on 27 August 2026:**

**Henri Nouwen: Discernment – Reading the signs of daily life.**

We meet every 6 weeks on a Thursday evening at 19.00 on Zoom.

It so happened that the group communicates in Afrikaans. If needed, we can consider an English-speaking group as well.

If you are interested in joining the group, please contact

Erna Möller at [erna@tlm.co.za](mailto:erna@tlm.co.za) or 082 731 9857.



It has started raining in some places, with trees putting forth blossoms and leaves so tender they don't seem to be up for the new season. But we know there will be fruit. This gracious arch breathes hope over our own journeys.

Kind Regards

George, together with Nicolin and Marina

**CENTRE FOR CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRITUALITY**

DRC: Circuit of Southeast Pretoria

**Website:** <https://sentrumvirspiritualiteit.co.za>

**Email address:** [info@sd-za.org](mailto:info@sd-za.org)

**Accreditation Application Forms:**

Afrikaans: <https://forms.gle/oFZi2MDUV2dZL6G57>

English: <https://forms.gle/jg6CJBi8qv7SkwBP9>

**Centre for Contemplative Spirituality banking details:**

ABSA Cheque Account: 4104247182

Reference: Name, Surname + 2027/2028 fee