World Community for Christian Meditation (SA)

Newsletter 22 January 2026

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WELCOME

Welcome to this TWENTY-SECOND newsletter of the World Community for Christian Meditation (South Africa) (WCCM-SA) as we continue our journey of meditation through 2026. We report on events offered in 2025 and what you can look forward to in the New Year both locally as well as globally through WCCM (International).

We would like to draw your attention to our new-look website which is in the process of being updated. In this regard we ask for updated information on active meditation groups across the country and make an appeal for some financial assistance. We also remind you of some key resources – material and digital – that that are available.

REFLECTION

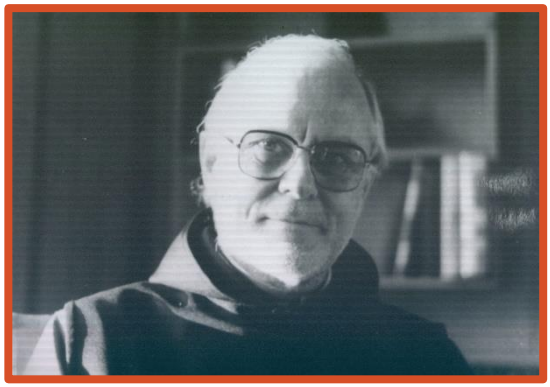
Why Are We Here?

The business of the Christian, no less than of the monk, is a very simple one. It is to open ourselves at the very centre of our being, to the source of our being. Not only to open it partially, but to open totally. Not only to open it some of the time, but to open it permanently. The purpose of the monk's life is to come to continuous prayer, to a state of undistracted attention, to a state of unbroken openness to the prayer of Christ in our hearts, to the simple union of our prayer with the prayer of Christ. This condition of unbroken prayer is the purpose of our life, not only as monks but even more deeply as Christians and as children of God. (*from Meditatio Talks 2005D – Laurence Freeman*)

John Main Centenary

A Letter Celebrating John Main's Centenary

[21 January 1926 – 21 January 2026]



Celebration means hope. We celebrate because, whatever may be negative or scary in our lives, we ever acknowledge connection to a fundamentally constant direction and purpose. It unfolds through good and bad times. The more we feel we are in a collective decline the more deeply we need to draw from the inner well of wisdom and hope.

Today our community is beginning a celebration of the hundredth anniversary of John Main's birth. His spirit of wisdom and faith has brought a remarkable phenomenon – the WCCM - into a living entity. For fifty years it is a becoming, a community witnessing to the primal personal and cosmic power of love. Inclusive, forgiving, bravely de-polarising in its way of working.

It is hard for me to imagine John Main, whom I first met 60 years ago, as being 100! He died at the age of 56 embracing the incompleteness of his mission and handing it in to hands of Christ and of those who would follow. That means us. He was wholly at peace in the hope that the dying seed would give birth which it continues to do. So, today I would like to share with you that I recommit myself to this unfolding work for the rest of my life. I do this in gratitude for the faith, the deep generosity and dedication that exists at all levels of our community. More than this, I invite you to join in a re-dedicating of yourselves personally and in your weekly groups and national communities to this mission.

What is our mission and purpose? To share a most simple path of hope and universal kindness through the dark times we are traversing. We cannot afford to despair. By discovering the hope and metanoia that daily meditation brings we are giving hope and meaning to all we do while helping to relieve the suffering of others.

This is how we suggest we can celebrate this gift of Fr John through our community this year:

Expansion

We have developed a new four-part introduction to meditation using videos and discussion. I suggest that in the course of this year every existing group - whether in person or online - uses this simple tool and turns itself into an introductory group for four weeks reaching out to new people. Man, like us, seek a path of companionship and

purposefulness through our common difficulties. Our National Coordinators can help organise this.

Deepening

Ultimately change comes through personal transformation not through numbers and busyness. So, we also suggest that every meditator considers making the deep silent retreat that we have developed and is finding a good response. It will take you into a new level of silence and clarity within the friendship of a community and the guidance of experienced fellow-meditators. The greater the confusion, the deeper we must go. National Coordinators will help to make this experience as available as possible.

Reaching Out

The WCCM is not alone in wanting to renew hope and to restore the primacy of love to all human interactions. With others we can work to rehumanise humanity. I suggest we reach out to collaborate with other communities, networks and organisations – and of course other faith traditions. Reflect on it with others and I think you will see ways to do this. We can bring meditation to restore faith, hope and humanity - in the ecological movement, education, health, confronting corporate greed and political tyranny, and touching the marginalised with simple kindness.

All this forms into a practical agenda as soon we meditate with others. Then sit and share with them what you fear, hope and feel committed to. Again, group leaders and national coordinators will find ways of developing this outreach.

Rooting

As part of this year's personal and community renewal let's re-acquaint ourselves with John Main's essential teaching. Make it a part of your day and you will feel the grace of a true teacher sharing with you the grace of his – and our – teacher.

Our theme this centenary year is the Future of Religion. As I read what I have just written I wonder if this is its future: Expansion, Deepening and Connection. Religion needs to serve and open the mystery not to control or define it. The contemplative revolution is the way and it is already unfolding.

Our John Main Seminar this year (September 17-20), led by a fellow meditator, Tim Shriver, will be a focal point for our year of renewal of hope and our faith in the primal power of love.

Thank you for our sharing this path of renewal together.

With much love

Laurence Freeman OSB

NEWS REPORT– Cape Town

Christian Meditation Groups

REPORT FROM DR JOHAN VAN DEN HEEVER

[Dutch Reformed Church, Rondebosch]

We start off every year with a Week of Prayer for four days where we, amongst others, introduce silence and meditation to the attendees. This year it ran from 12-15 January.

Our Weekly Sunday Silent liturgy is at 18:00 in the Chapel of the Annunciation – 2 Derry Road, Rondebosch.

We have a biweekly meditation group that meets on Thursdays at 10:00 at 2 Derry Road. Our first meeting will be 26 February.

On Ash Wednesday (18 February) we will also have a silent liturgy at 18:00.

If you would like to know more, contact me at vdhj100@gmail.com .

REPORT FROM JOY CARKEEK

(St Michael's Catholic Church, Rondebosch)

I and three other parishioners facilitate two small groups of meditators from St Michael's and other parishes both Catholic and Anglican.

The first group has been meeting at my home for the past three and a half years. The group consists of younger women who are either catechists or mothers of children attending catechism. Their interest grew from the past ten years of practising meditation with the 120 children who are part of our Good Shepherd Catechism programme. We meet weekly for 45 minutes, listening to a short talk taken from the WCCM website followed by 30 minutes of meditation. Some choose to stay on for a further 45 minutes of silence during which time we do contemplative handwork while listening to Taize or other sacred music.

The second regular group consisting of between 14 and 18 people meet in the church every Saturday morning from 8.00 to 8.45 a.m. Again, a short WCCM podcast is followed by meditation. One Saturday a month we stay on for a further 30 minutes to share our experiences, challenges and fruits of meditation.

We held a retreat on the first Saturday of Advent 2025. A group of 42 gathered for the morning, experiencing a time of silent meditation, prayer, poetry reading and music.

We will hold a similar retreat at the start of Lent in February. We intend this time to be a

renewed commitment to 40 days of regular morning and evening meditation which we trust will become an established habit.

On the last Friday of each month our parishioners are included in a morning of prayer at the Dutch Reformed Church, organized in collaboration with 10 other Christian parishes in the area. We facilitate a short time of meditation for the group.

NEWS REPORT- Johannesburg

Meditation Events 2025

WCCM (South Africa) together with the Jesuit Institute hosted four in-person events in 2025.

Seeing Is Believing: An Artist's Way of the Cross

This session, held on the Saturday before Holy Week, used the art of Sieger Köder, a German priest-artist, to offer a Way of the Cross based on five of his paintings. Participants then captured their experience of the morning by engaging in one of three art forms – Zen drawing, mandala colouring or mindful photography.

One participant offered the following feedback: "Thank you for this so well prepared and conducted art and meditation morning! I liked all of it- also the moving around to different stages and also using different techniques of expression. Please keep it up! Looking forward to upcoming sessions."

A Journey Within: Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle

In this session, we introduced participants to the life and work of St Teresa of Avila, a 16th century Spanish mystic, writer, and reformer of the Carmelite order, with a special focus on her latest work completed in 1577 – *The Interior Castle*. This text traces the inward journey of the soul's life of prayer through the seven mansions of the castle to the innermost dwelling where God resides. Along the way she describes – from personal

experience – various gifts that are granted in each mansion as well as the trials that have to be endured.

Breaking the Chain

The focus here was on the common human experience of addiction – an experience not only of alcoholics or drug users, but of anyone who attempts to fill a spiritual void by some destructive habitual activity. The nature and origin of addiction and its various types were explored as was the ability to recognise and deal with it through the 12-step process. The role of meditation in this process was emphasised.

The Inner Voice

Participants in this session were invited to explore in small groups a poem randomly selected from a prepared selection. After analysis of their poem and choosing a word or short phrase from it to serve as a mantra, they entered a period of silence. They were then invited to read their poem to the assembly.

The second half of the morning was devoted to writing individual poems after a period of meditation, having previously selected a form and theme. The morning ended with a session of voluntary poetry reading.

Come and Rest a While

The proposed weekend retreat was cancelled due to logistic difficulties and an apparent lack of availability. A similar event will be planned for 2026.

National Arts Festival

Since 2018, with a 2-year COVID break, WCCM(SA) has offered daily meditation session on various themes during the central week of the National Arts Festival in Makhanda (Grahamstown).

2018 Introduction to Christian Meditation

2019 Images of Meditation

2022 The Reality of God (John Main)

2023 Meditate with the Mystics – Five Guides on the Christian Way

2024 Finding Christ on the Buddha's Path – The Ten Ox-Herder Pictures

2025 St Teresa of Avila's Four Stages of Prayer

The attendance at these sessions has been relatively small – never more than 10-15 – and the viability of the exercise is open to discernment given the cost of travel and accommodation for the presenter. A decision whether to continue with this will be made shortly.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2026 - Johannesburg

Seminars in 2026

Weekly Online Meditation Sessions

We extend the following invitation to any interested person.

Join other meditators for a weekly meditation session (30-40 minutes)

- **Tuesdays at 06:00 (6 a.m. SAST)**
- **Thursdays at 20:00 (8 p.m. SAST)**

To receive a link to these sessions held on Zoom, simply reply by email to Paul Faller (fallerpaul582@gmail.com)

Introduction to Meditation

In a country as vast as ours, it is often difficult to gather for in-person workshops or seminars. Nevertheless, we are keen to offer introductory sessions wherever or whenever there is a request for such. These sessions which can be arranged in-person or online would present Christian meditation to those who are interested to learn this way of prayer or who are keen to start a meditation group in their locality.

Please contact Paul (fallerpaul582@gmail.com or 083 326 4568) if you would like to arrange such a meeting. Depending on where the request comes from, we would mutually discern whether an in-person or online arrangement is most feasible.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS 2026

Talk Series: The Future of Religion

I believe that one of the most important question for our time is – what is the role of religion? Is it a hobby? Is it a pastime? Is it an escape from reality? Is it the opium of the masses? In the last century, that question was often answered very negatively. Religion was finished. Science was in the process of explaining all the mysteries of the world. And society would be better off without religion which so often was the cause of war and conflict.

The attempt to dismiss religion failed because we can't do without religion any more than we can do without music or art or the other things that make us fully human and give us a sense of transcendence. So, as contemplatives we need to ask contemporary questions. And this is our theme for 2026: The Future of Religion.

Is religion going to transform, is it going to offer us new perspectives on reality in collaboration with other ways of knowledge, respecting and developing the dignity and depth of the human? And how do the different religions collaborate and interact? Our own contribution to this is to understand the role of contemplation : that at the heart of every religion there is a contemplative or a mystical dimension. There are three pillars to religion: the institutional, the intellectual and the mystical. Without the mystical dimension properly developed, the other two hijack the project of religion. The deep source of authentic religion must always be the mystical. It is the personal and collective experience of God, of ultimate reality, and of the meaning and purpose of all things.

It unfolds through and beyond thought and imagination. It is this contemplative dimension of religion that throws open a way into the common ground of humanity. That's why religion is important and inevitable. Because it is an ever new way of transcending divisions, our addiction to war and violence, dishonesty and deception in public life and restores integrity and truth, indeed love, within the human family.

So, we have to understand what religion is for and understand how it may evolve. Just as everything else is changing around us in the 21st century, so religion is also going through a transformation. This is a fascinating and important topic, and this is why we will be reflecting on it throughout the coming year with inspiring and original teachers deeply involved in all the questions of our time.

We will shortly launch a full programme for The Future of Religion series. I hope you can join us and be part of this journey into one of the most important and rewarding question of our time.

(Laurence Freeman OSB)

- 10 February - 15 December, 2026
- 19:00 - 21:30 CET[1]
- 10 Sessions Online

You can register for the full series and watch recordings in your own time. For more information and the schedule of dates and speakers go to
The Future of Religion | WCCM

[1] CET remains at UTC+1 during the standard time period, usually from late October to late March. When Daylight Saving Time is in effect—typically from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October—regions switch from CET (UTC+1) to CEST (UTC+2).

2026 Programme

For details of all events offered by WCCM in 2026 go to WCCM | The World Community for Christian Meditation

RESOURCES

New Website Design

https://wccm.org.za/

Our website now has a fresh look, and we are in the process of updating it.

Meditation Groups

On the website at https://wccm.org.za/meditation-groups/ you will find information regarding both adult and school meditation groups. For your convenience the two tables are printed below.

1. Kindly confirm whether the group you may be concerned with is still active and whether there is any change in the information provided here.
2. If you belong to a group that is not featured here, please provide the relevant information so that we can add it to the webpage. This will help the frequent enquiries we receive from people looking for groups in their area.
3. If you would like to start a group, please be in touch and we shall provide any necessary assistance.

In all three of the above cases, direct your communication to Paul at fallerpaul582@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Adult Groups

Town & Suburb	Title	Name & Surname	Telephone	E-mail	Place	Time
Pretoria, Villieria	Me	AnnaMarie Hollier	0123313498 0845005086	annamariehollier@gmail.com	474 24th Avenue Villieria	Tues 16:30
Bloemfontein, Pellissier	Me	Ronel du Preez	0828832903	roneldprz@gmail.com	Please enquire	Twice a month
Johannesburg, Linden	Mr	Neville Smithers	0117823755	info@trinitylinden.org.za	Trinity Methodist Linden	Tues 18:00
Cape Town, Rondebosch	Dr	Johan van den Heever	0216866272	vdhj100@gmail.com	NG Church	Tues 18:30
Johannesburg Online	Mr	Paul Faller	0833264568	fallerpaul582@gmail.com	Online	Tues 06:00

Town & Suburb	Title	Name & Surname	Telephone	E-mail	Place	Time
Johannesburg Online	Mr	Paul Faller	0833264568	fallerpaul582@gmail.com	Online	Thurs 20:00
Rondebosch, Cape Town	Ms	Joy Carkeek	0836758515	joycarkeek@gmail.com	Atrium St Michael's	Sat 08:30
Rondebosch, Cape Town	Dr	Johan vd Heever Hannelore	0834482609 0844045080	vdhj100@gmail.com	2 Derry Road	Sun 19:00

School Groups

School	Location	Contact Person	Telephone	Web or Email
De La Salle Holy Cross College Primary School	Victory Park, Johannesburg	Mary Hyam	0117825217	http://www.delasalle.co.za/
McAuley House	Parktown West, Johannesburg	Jocelyn Thompson	0117261310	http://www.mcauleyhouse.co.za/
Marian College Primary School	Linmeyer, Johannesburg	Angelique Durand	0114350646	http://www.mariancollege.co.za/
Bergville Primary School	Bergville, Kwazulu-Natal	Cheryl Robinson	0364481086	bergprime@intekom.co.za
St James Secondary School	Port Elizabeth	Stanford Zacharias	0739726218	zachariasstanford6@gmail.com

New Timer App – Silentium

https://wccm.org/app

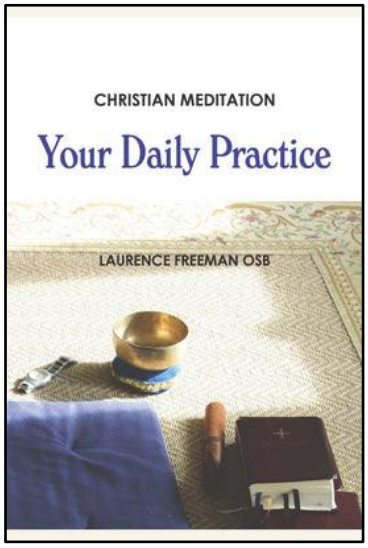
Silentium is the official meditation app of the **World Community for Christian Meditation** (WCCM) – a global community sharing the ancient Christian tradition of silence and stillness.

Guided by the teaching of John Main OSB, Silentium helps you build a daily rhythm of meditation and reflection. Experience calm, clarity, and connection through a practice that unites body, mind, and spirit.

Features:

- Guided meditations and audio reflections in multiple languages
- A customizable timer with gentle bells and ambient backgrounds
- AI-powered insights to help you understand and deepen your practice
- Daily reflections and readings from the WCCM community
- Smart meditation reminders to keep your rhythm steady
- Tracking of meditation history, streaks, and achievements
- Offline mode for uninterrupted silence anywhere
- Access to WCCM resources and global community events

Christian Meditation: Your Daily Practice



This book is helpful for anyone seeking a deeper spiritual life. It is especially useful to those exploring the basic teaching on Christian meditation as a way to depth and meaning in their life. Laurence Freeman deals clearly and usefully with the simple but sometimes puzzling questions that challenge the seeker: What is prayer? How do we pray? How do we look at progress on this journey? The newcomer to meditation will be encouraged to start on the journey. The practising meditator will find in this book refreshment for their practice and a way to share it with others.

Contact Paul at fallerpaul582@gmail.com

Meditation Chimes

Produce good vibrations with a gentle tap of the wooden mallet on the single 15 cm metallophone. This solo tone rod emits a powerful tone that lasts for 20 seconds or more. It consists of one polished solid aluminium rod on a meranti holder with felt base. Handcrafted in Tulbagh In the Western Cape. Available at R150 + plus postage

Contact Paul at fallerpaul582@gmail.com

Meditatio Talk Series

For many years and four times a year a Meditatio CD has been sent to each registered Christian Meditation group around the world. To keep up with the times, these Meditatio CDs are being offered as audio files that can be simply downloaded and used at weekly groups. Go to:

https://meditatiotalks.wccm.org/?mc_cid=7ba082098b&mc_eid=7581bdb71e

An Appeal

Supplying services such as compiling and distributing this newsletter, and the updating, hosting and maintenance of the website and LinkedIn page does not happen with out cost. While WCCM(SA) offers these and other occasional services without asking a membership fee, we would like to make an appeal to those who benefit from them for even a small contribution to help keep the movement viable.

If you would like to make a donation, the banking details are as follows:

BANK Nedbank
ACCOUNT NAME World Community for Christian Meditation
ACCOUNT NUMBER 1171190328
REFERENCE Your name

Contributions will be acknowledged in the next newsletter