



acc

Association of  
Christians in Counselling  
and Linked Professions

# ACC National Conference 2026

2-4  
October

Kents Hill Park Training and  
Conference Centre  
Milton Keynes



# Homecoming

# Welcome

Homecoming, as told in the story of the lost son, is less about geography than identity - a return to a place where we essentially belong. When he turns homeward, the son does not plan to arrive with conditions, or prepared defences, rather he comes as is and has been, with honesty, regrets and a simple longing to be back - irrespective of where he will now fit into his father's household. That he is met by the father with compassion, joy and a desire to celebrate, rather than with the expected condemnation and marginalisation, is the startling aspect of this story, told as an exemplar of the nature of God's relationship with us.

Homecoming happens when we have confidence that we can similarly be seen, known, and welcomed, when empathy and grace help us return to where we came from, recognising where and with whom we belong.

Henri Nouwen reflecting on the parable, writes in *The Return of The Prodigal Son*.

“Home is the center of my being where I can hear the voice that says: ‘You are my Beloved, on you my favour rests’ [...] the same voice that speaks to all the children of God and sets them free to live in the midst of a dark world while remaining in the light.”

The father's open arms, inviting connection and safe warm embrace reflects something of the ministry and practice of ACC members.

In our various roles, we offer welcome, attentive presence and skilled accompaniment, a safe space, where struggles, truth and meaning can surface and acceptance and healing can begin. In a contemporary world where there are many competing discourses relating to identity, and many fractured places where we dwell, we hope the conference is an opportunity to explore what homecoming and belonging means in a Christian context and in our personal and professional lives.



# Contents

<a href="#">Timetable</a>	4
<a href="#">Keynote speech</a>	5
<a href="#">Plenary session 1</a>	6
<a href="#">Plenary session 2</a>	7
<a href="#">Overview of training streams</a>	8
<a href="#">Training streams</a>	9
<a href="#">Prices and booking</a>	18
<a href="#">Terms and conditions</a>	19
<a href="#">Frequently asked questions</a>	20

# Timetable

## DAY 1

Friday  
2 Oct 2026

14:00 - 18:30	Registration
18:30 - 19:30	Dinner
<b>19:45 - 21:15</b>	<b>Keynote speech</b>
21:15 - 23:00	Bar

## DAY 2

Saturday  
3 Oct 2026

08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast
<b>09:15 - 10:45</b>	<b>Training</b>
10:45 - 11:15	Break and refreshments
<b>11:15 - 12:45</b>	<b>Training</b>
12:45 - 14:00	Lunch
<b>14:00 - 15:30</b>	<b>Plenary session 1</b>
15:30 - 16:00	Break and refreshments
<b>16:00 - 17:30</b>	<b>Plenary session 2</b>
17:30 - 18:30	Free time/networking
18:30 - 19:30	Dinner
19:45 - 21:15	Free time/networking
21:15 - 23:00	Bar

## DAY 3

Sunday  
4 Oct 2026

08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast
<b>09:15 - 10:45</b>	<b>Sunday service</b>
10:45 - 11:15	Break and refreshments
<b>11:15 - 12:45</b>	<b>Training</b>
12:45 - 14:00	Lunch
<b>14:00 - 15:30</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>15:30 - 16:00</b>	<b>Commission</b>
16:00 - 17:30	Departure

# Woundedness to belovedness: Journeying from trauma into the homecoming embrace of love, authenticity and healing (therapeúō)

with Dr Divine Charura

## Keynote speaker

Divine Charura (Dr) is a Professor of Counselling Psychology and a registered counselling psychologist, licensed as a practitioner psychologist with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) in England (UK). He is also a psychotherapist and an Honorary Fellow of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), in addition to being an adult psychotherapist and Coaching Psychologist. Divine's research interests focus on psychotraumatology and mental health across the lifespan, and he has an extensive publication record as both author and editor. For Divine's articles and publications, please see [here](#).



This keynote explores homecoming as a deeply human and spiritual movement, less a return to a physical place and more a journey back to identity, connection, and embodied belonging. In keeping with the conference theme and the story of the lost son, homecoming is not something earned but something received. It is the courageous willingness to be authentically encountered as we truly are: wounded yet hopeful, contrite and brokenhearted yet holding hope in the power of love and grace. Viewed this way, the parable becomes a radical narrative of unconditional love, centred on the father's compassionate embrace, an encounter that interrupts shame, marginalisation, and fear, and offers instead joy, restoration, and welcome.

In therapeutic and pastoral contexts, this unconditional welcome mirrors the heart of relational encounter. Through inclusive practice, embodied presence, and compassionate attentiveness, we cultivate environments where individuals, couples, and families, especially those carrying the weight of trauma, may feel safe enough to return to themselves. Healing emerges through relationship: in moments of deep meeting where a person is seen, known, and held with dignity. Such encounters allow identity to be rediscovered beyond rupture, hurt, or displacement.

Professor Divine Charura will draw on his research into trauma across the lifespan, relational processes, diverse philosophical and cultural perspectives, neuroscience, the psychology of future thinking, psychotherapeutic practice, and community work with marginalised groups who may feel "homeless" or without belonging. This keynote invites reflection on what Divine describes as the very essence of God's nature "Love", and opens a dialogue on how practitioners may participate in therapeutic and pastoral homecoming by offering spaces of containment, empathy, love, and hope. Together, we will explore what homecoming means in our professional callings and in our psychosocial and spiritual lives, and consider how we might accompany others toward encounter, belonging, wholeness, and the healing embrace of Love.

# Plenary session 1

## Lost and found: The impact of religious abuse on identity, belonging, and the search for home

with Dr Lisa Oakley and Dr Kathryn Kinmond

In this plenary, we will explore people's experiences of harm in religious and other contexts; specifically, how these experiences affect a sense of self and belonging. Centred in the words and chosen images of people who have experienced these abuses we will reflect upon the impact of the abuses, consider the journeys of those who have been harmed and explore how counselling and therapy can best support people in their search for homecoming and belonging.

### Dr Lisa Oakley

Lisa is professor of safeguarding and knowledge exchange and deputy course leader for the MSc in Family and Child Psychology in the School of Psychology at the University of Chester in the UK. Last year, Lisa was made an honorary fellow of the ACC. Lisa has taught in higher education for over 30 years. She is a chartered psychologist and chair of the British psychological society safeguarding advisory group. Lisa has conducted research into issues of faith, safeguarding, abuse and creating healthy cultures for the past 20 years and has focused on spiritual abuse, she has co-authored a number of articles and book chapters on these topics; Lisa has presented on these topics nationally and internationally. Lisa has recently conducted a cross-faith research project exploring experiences of disclosing abuse that was experienced in a religious context.



### Dr Kathryn Kinmond

Kathy is a Chartered Psychologist, Accredited Counsellor/Psychotherapist in private practice. She was an Executive member of BACP Spirituality between 2013 and 2022. Kathy has been an academic in Higher education for over 30 years, during which time she has been module leader for several undergraduate modules, programme leader for the Master of Research; experienced supervisor at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and also Chair of two Faculty committees. She currently lectures and supervises PG students part time. Collaborating with Prof Oakley, she has been researching into faith-based abuse for almost twenty years. Kathy has been a member of the NHS Health Research Authority REC since 2005; currently being Vice Chair of South Birmingham committee. She has five grandchildren and two dogs - all of whom keep her very busy!



# Plenary session 2

## When cancer interrupts who I am: Helping people with a cancer diagnosis find themselves

Sara Lister - Oncology Psychotherapist RN, BSc (Hons), PGDAE, MA, MSc, MBACP (Accred.), ACC (Accred.)

*"A cancer diagnosis changes your life in an instant"* writes Wes Streeting in the foreword to the National Cancer Plan released in February 2026. Any change as we know, can at the very least be unsettling, at the worst traumatic. This is amplified when we are separated from our place of safety for periods of time, that is our homes, and the familiar, due to the demands of medical care.

During this plenary session we will:

- Explore the current landscape of cancer diagnosis and treatment focusing specifically on the emotional and spiritual terrain of this "foreign land".
- Consider how we can help those with cancer related distress. Drawing on our pastoral and professional knowledge and experience, to at least cope and at best be transformed by their experience as strangers in the land of cancer.

### Sara Lister

My working life began in the 1980's as I trained as a nurse. On qualifying the first ward I worked on looked after patients with either cancer or HIV. Emotionally it was demanding but also satisfying as I had the opportunity to get to know my patients and provide not just physical care but also support them with the distress that cancer, and its associated treatment, brought.

During the last forty years I have had the opportunity to work in several different roles in health care including lecturing, service development, and management, none of which is ever far from attempting to make a difference to those with cancer.

A career break abroad in 2004, setting up palliative care services, was the beginning of what some call my second career. Yearning to be more closely involved with patients again, I started training as a counsellor. Training at Waverley Abbey College and London School of Theology not only gave me the skills to work as a therapist but also to learn how to integrate my faith into my work.

I currently work at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, a specialist cancer centre, as an oncology psychotherapist. I have the privilege to provide psychological support to a case load of patients who are receiving treatment for their cancer at the hospital. There is considerable variety to what I do as cancer has some many different forms and is no respecter of age, wealth, nationality or religion.

Working with such a challenging group of diseases also has an impact on caregivers so I provide supervision to nursing and allied health professional colleagues. I have just begun a PhD looking at the impact of providing psychospiritual support to those with cancer on clergy, recognising the existential challenges these diseases can bring.

My happy restorative place is the outdoors, my garden, walking or on horseback.



# Overview of training

All training streams run for four sessions from Saturday to Sunday. For more information on the training, please click on the training stream. If you have any questions, please contact [office@acc-uk.org](mailto:office@acc-uk.org).

Training stream	Trainer(s)	For	Page
<a href="#">Attachment and homecoming</a>	Pauline Andrew	Counsellors	9
<a href="#">How to help survivors of childhood sexual abuse</a>	Dr Heather Churchill	Counsellors	10
<a href="#">Using art in therapy</a>	Rachel Cooper	Counsellors	11
<a href="#">Demystifying relational depth in practice</a>	Dr Janet Penny	Counsellors	12
<a href="#">Fresh eyes on inner child work: A three-lens relational developmental approach</a>	Catherine O’Riordan	Counsellors/ Pastoral Carers	13
<a href="#">Shame and pastoral care</a>	Peter Watts	Pastoral Carers	14
<a href="#">Identity, purpose, belonging and finding home</a>	Neil Flint and Sue Iqbal	Coaches/Mentors	15
<a href="#">Spiritual accompaniment: Homecoming of another kind</a>	Dr Pollyanna Magne and Katherine Thompson	Those interested in spiritual direction	16
<a href="#">Retreat - prodigal son</a>	Sue and Chris Monckton-Rickett	All	17



# Training steams

## Attachment and homecoming

with Pauline Andrew

This four-part training will take a fresh look at Attachment behaviour, its roots and outworking in our lives. Using creative tools, including the new 'Understanding Attachment' cards, Pauline will help participants to explore their own story and discover new ways of working with clients.

### Session 1

#### Homecoming and Secure Attachment

Exploring what it means to be securely attached and how we carry 'home' in our hearts; the impact on self-worth, relationships and faith.

### Session 2

#### Homecoming and Ambivalent Attachment

Exploring the dynamics of Ambivalent Attachment behaviour; the uncertainty and anxiety this can bring, affecting our self-worth, relationships and faith.

### Session 3

#### Homecoming and Avoidant Attachment

Exploring the dynamics of Avoidant Attachment behaviour; the sense that life is DIY and we're best keeping our distance, affecting our self-worth, relationships and faith.

### Session 4

#### Homecoming and Disorganised Attachment

Exploring the dynamics of Disorganised Attachment behaviour; the impact of abuse and developmental deficit, affecting our self-worth, relationships and faith.



Pauline Andrew

## About the trainer

Director of PA Counselling & Training (PACT) and of Deep Release Counselling & Training, Pauline taught Diploma courses in Therapeutic Counselling and Supervision for Barnabas Counselling Training for many years. She also wrote and taught the L5 Certificate in Integrating Creative Interventions in Counselling (all CPCAB). Pauline and her husband Chris now run a wide range of popular online and face-to-face Deep Release training courses for counsellors.

Pauline has written three Creative Guides to Working with the Inner Child, Blocked Anger and Nesting Dolls. Her cartoon-illustrated counselling cards, "Roles Played in Families", "Core Needs in Families", "Roles Played in Anger", "Roles Played in Groups" and "Understanding Attachment" are hugely popular around the UK and in an increasing number of other countries. She is also closely involved in the production of the pact-resources-online web apps, enabling counsellors to work with the cards and other creative tools online.

Pauline and Chris live in Norfolk, where they share three children and five grandchildren.



# How to help survivors of childhood sexual abuse

with Dr Heather Churchill

The training will address how to help survivors of childhood emotional and/or sexual abuse. The training, spread over two days, will cover a number of difficult complex topics, including:

- the false memory syndrome controversy and implications for counsellors
- why clients are reluctant to disclose a history of sexual abuse
- how to address blocks to self-care
- grounding techniques and the importance of working within a window of tolerance
- self-harm and how this links with abuse in childhood
- addressing spiritual issues, including the issue of forgiveness
- client notes and important legal implications

Due to the nature of the topic being discussed, care will be taken that the training and all the group work is undertaken in a sensitive way, with a high regard for the emotional safety of delegates.



Dr Heather Churchill

## About the trainer

DPsych (Metanoia/Middlesex), MTh (Middlesex) BA (Hons) (Brunel)  
Fellow of the ACC and Registered Member (Senior Accredited Counsellor)

Registered Member BACP (Senior Accredited Counsellor/Psychotherapist)

Heather is a Senior Lecturer in Counselling and Psychotherapy and author of the Churchill Framework. She has many years of experience as a trainer, therapist and supervisor. Heather has co-authored two books: *Insight into Helping Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse* and *Insight into Shame* and has published a number of articles in the *Accord* journal of the ACC. In her private clinical practice, she specialises in counselling adults who have experienced abuse in childhood.



# Using art in therapy

with Rachel Cooper

Being creative can unlock the door to a greater appreciation of our own internal landscape. This hands-on training will give you some practical, creative ideas and tools which you can adapt and use in therapy sessions to help clients express themselves when words are not enough.

Art making directly connects us with God as our creator, whether or not we think we are good at art. Often, it is not about the end product, but the process we go through that helps us to express ourselves and communicate in a different way. As an Art Psychotherapist, I often find people are confused about what art therapists do. Using creativity, I help clients to communicate and process to improve their emotional, physical and mental well-being. Please do not fall into the trap of saying ... "but I can't draw."

God, our creator, created you in His image, therefore we can all create. When we face trauma or a threat to our survival, our logical thinking brain goes offline. This disables our speech and can make using words difficult to process these events. However, our emotional, creative brain was in overdrive to find a solution for our survival. Using creativity in therapy allows access to these events to help recover and make sense of these difficult situations.

There will be opportunities to work with many different types of art materials, so prepare to get your hands dirty. You may also want to consider what you wear or bring something to protect your clothes. All artwork will be considered confidential and will not be shared unless you choose to do so. However, there may be some collective group artwork activities and opportunities to share your work within the group.



Rachel Cooper

## About the trainer

Rachel Cooper is an HCPC registered Art Psychotherapist, and certified ITR Trauma Specialist and Trainer, ITR Institute, USA. She is a member of the British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) and an accredited member of ACC. Rachel's career began as a teacher, then as an Education Officer. She owned an optical company for 15 years, and in 2012, she planted a church with her husband in Chester. Here, she worked with the homeless and most vulnerable and developed an interest in recovery from trauma, having recovered from PTSD herself. This led to her master's degree in art psychotherapy.

From the Chester church, they have planted two more churches, and she is currently a facilitator for M4 Europe, a church-planting training programme. She is currently studying for an Advanced Diploma in Supervision. She has a private art therapy and trauma practice in Chester and works online for the ITR Institute in Canada, USA, UK, Oman and Australia. She has been married to Keith for 32 years, and they have an adult daughter who was married this year.



# Demystifying relational depth in practice

with Dr Janet Penny

## Introduction and aims:

Working at relational depth not only deepens the therapeutic relationship - which leads to better outcomes in therapy - but also presents opportunities for moments of deep connection and healing. Relational depth is one of those ideas in practice that counsellors intuitively recognise but may struggle to put into words or may not have a framework of understanding for what actually happens and how it can be facilitated in counselling.

This experiential workshop aims to enable counsellors to better understand how to work at relational depth, both in terms of the on-going relationship with the client and moments of relational depth and transformation, including from a Christian perspective. Rather than viewing relational depth as some mystical idea, the main focus of the training will unpack the concept and process in practice, giving you a way of understanding what it is, how it is an important underlying mechanism of therapeutic change, and how you can safely facilitate relational depth in your counselling practice, whatever your theoretical approach.

## Workshop contents:

What is relational depth?

Why relational depth matters

Unpacking relational depth in practice - facilitating relational depth and moments of meeting

Relational depth in Christian counselling

## Attendees:

This experiential training is aimed at trainee and qualified counsellors and psychotherapists working with adult clients in a range of settings. Attendees from other linked professions are also welcome to attend but will need a good understanding of the counselling process and ethics as the training is aimed primarily at practising counsellors/psychotherapists.

## About the trainer

Dr Janet Penny is a counselling psychologist and psychotherapist who has extensive experience as a trainer in Christian counselling at undergraduate and post-graduate level. Her work also includes research supervision for doctoral candidates at the Metanoia Institute and London School of Theology, as well as consultancy for professional organisations. Janet has a private clinical practice and enjoys working at the creative edges of therapy using therapeutic photography and creative writing. Her main professional focus has been on the integration of faith and therapy, including writing on relational and power dynamics in Christian counselling. She enjoys photography and is also involved in prayer ministry at her local church.



Dr Janet Penny



# Fresh eyes on inner child work: A three-lens relational developmental approach

with Catherine O’Riordan

*‘I thought finally that of all the nostalgias that haunt the human heart the greatest of them all, for me, is an everlasting longing to bring what is youngest home to what is oldest, in us all’*

-Van der Post

## The training is in four parts:

Part 1: Warm up, contracting/group ethos, introductions, principles of this approach.

Part 2: Liberating your eternal inner child

Part 3: Growing adult maturity

Part 4: Identifying and learning to relate lovingly to your wounded inner child part and closing reflections

In this three-pronged approach I focus simultaneously on helping the client work towards becoming a mature adult (lens one) whilst at the same time helping them identify and build on all the unique, God-given qualities that make us, us - what I think of as liberating their eternal inner child (lens two). At the same time, I seek to help the client move towards a more integrated adult psychological stance whereby they take responsibility for relating lovingly to their wounded inner child (lens three).

As well as being underpinned by humanistic values/principles and multiple humanistic models - Gestalt, Erskine, Neuro Linguistic Programming, Psychodrama, Person Centered, Transactional Analysis - I also draw on Object Relations, Child Development, and Neuroscience. This approach integrates a Christian spirituality and faith perspective, either worked with implicitly or explicitly.



Catherine O’Riordan

## About the trainer

Catherine O’Riordan (UKCP, ACC, APSE) is a developmentally based, relationally focused integrative psychotherapist. Catherine lives in Nottingham with James; they have two grown-up children.

For over a decade Catherine has sought to articulate a fully humanistic-integrative approach to counselling and psychotherapy whereby the whole, called-by-name individual, can be restored to their God-given nature, wounds and all. This has resulted in her ‘inner child’ approach. Qualified as a Gestalt groupwork facilitator, Catherine’s interests include how to facilitate healthy groups - an experience of solitude in community - where the individual can feel secure, learn and thrive.

Initially working as a chaplain and counsellor in a South East London Roman Catholic Sixth Form College, Catherine works in Nottingham as a psychotherapist, supervisor and workshop facilitator. She has an undergraduate and postgraduate degree in philosophy and theology from Heythrop College, University of London. For three years she tried her vocation as a Carmelite novice before training as a counsellor and then as a psychotherapist. Catherine identifies as Roman Catholic, as well as engaging with the Quakers, a 24/7 community and Elijah House Prayer Ministry.

# Shame and pastoral care

with Peter Watts

In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.

I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause. (Psalm 25: 1-2)

Shame has an impact on all of us. It is not what God originally intended, but it is pervasive, impacting our view of, and relationship with, God, ourselves and those around us. Jesus promised not to leave us as orphans. Through the Cross his intention is to restore to us the glory that was there before the Fall and will be ours again in the coming age. These sessions will explore some of the origins of shame, why we find addressing it shameful and how recovery from shame should form a central part of discipleship. Our time will be interactive as we seek to explore how the church can address shame more effectively.

## Core training aims

To consider shame from a creation perspective and an impact of the Fall

To explore familial, social and cultural origins of shame

To explore how shame impacts our view of self, God and others

To show how the bodies God has given us respond to shame

To explore how shame affects our emotions and thoughts

To understand common responses to shame

To understand problematic shame coping strategies

To reflect on the role of the Cross in restoring the shamed

To see this restoration as a part of discipleship

To consider how to develop shame reducing communities

To consider pastoral aspects of shame reduction



Peter Watts

## About the trainer

Peter Watts is a Christian who has trained as a counsellor specialising in shame and behavioral addictions. He has experience in supporting those problematic behaviours are both a pseudo-way of coping with shame while also causing more shame. Peter has a specialist interest in the impact of shame on sexual identity and sexual behaviours. He is an Accredited Member of the BACP and member of the ACC as well as a freelance trainer for the Institute of Sex Addiction Training (ISAT).



# Identity, purpose, belonging and finding home

with Neil Flint and Sue Iqbal

A coaching approach to exploring a journey towards identity, purpose and belonging – a set of workshops to consider underpinning theories, biblical narratives, coaching tools and techniques and working with clients to find their way home.

Neil and Sue will create a space for practitioners to explore and experience coaching within this theme both theoretically and practically through a series of workshops. Using Sue's Signposts Coaching Framework as a map throughout the four sessions, they will guide practitioners through this experiential journey.

## Participants will:

Explore and consider theoretical underpinning for their coaching practice

Draw on biblical narratives and consider how these provide a context for their work

Experience working within an established framework and use relevant tools and techniques to support clients



## About the trainers

Sue is an accredited Senior Practitioner Coach Mentor/Coach with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). Her experience has been gained from senior leadership in education, across charities and the church sector. She now specialises in leadership and life coaching. Sue has many years' experiences of designing and running coaching training, and her company runs an EMCC Accredited (EQA) Christian Coaching and Mentoring Course. She has also published a book on Authentic Leadership (Golden Threads). She lives in the countryside and enjoys swimming, reading, and spending time with family and friends.



Sue Iqbal



Neil Flint

Neil is an ILM Level 7 qualified executive coach and accredited senior practitioner with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). He works independently as a leadership development consultant across private, public and faith sectors, having previously been a successful senior school leader at both local and national level.

Neil is passionate about the transformational nature of coaching as a tripartite dialogue between coach, coachee and ever-present Holy Spirit that enables the client to grow into the person God designed them to be. He seeks to enable clients to recognise the core of who they are by 'holding up a mirror' to deepens awareness of their God-given identity. He promotes a journey of self-discover to restore a vision of their purpose and how they fit into God's great plan. Finally, he encourages clients to reflect on the relational context of their journey, nurturing a sense of belonging.

# Spiritual accompaniment: Homecoming of another kind

with Dr Pollyanna Magne and Katharine Thompson

The first of these two sessions will consider how people seek solace in the contemporary world, what they are looking for in their 'me time' or 'homecoming' and what part Spiritual Accompaniment may play in that. We will explore how perceptions of spirituality as viewed by health professionals are changing, and how a holistic approach is slowly changing the dynamic between Spiritual Accompaniment, counselling, psychotherapy and medicalised responses. We will also look at where the boundaries lie, and the practices and principles that minimise the risk of harm or spiritual abuse.

The second session will appraise the similarities and the differences between Spiritual Accompaniment and talking therapies. It will explore the explicit focus on faith and how the language of belief, scripture, God and the Divine frame the conversation. We will explore the notion of listening three ways: to the client (or 'directee'); to the inner movements of the director; and to the whisper of the Holy Spirit. We will ask what it may take to become a Spiritual Director in the Christian tradition and what those called to this ministry may need to hold gently or lay to rest.

## About the trainers

Dr Pollyanna Magne. Director of the Spiritual Direction Programme at Sarum College, a Spiritual Director, Retreat Leader, and a National Teaching Fellow.

In her previous career as an Associate Professor in Academic Development and Clinical Education Polly noticed the pace of work across academic, health and business sectors increased exponentially. She also noticed the prevalence of burn-out and a growing need for people to reconnect with themselves, those they love and the things that make them feel valued and fulfilled.

As Director of Spiritual Direction at Sarum College Polly supports the formation of those called to a ministry in Spiritual Direction. Together they explore what it means to accompany those who are taking time to pause, breathe, explore their spirituality, deepen their faith and enrich their relationship with the Divine.

Polly nourishes her own faith through pilgrimage, contemplative retreats, arts festivals, singing (loudly - sorry), reading and eating cake!



Dr Pollyanna Magne



Katharine Thompson

Katharine Thompson is a tutor in Spiritual Direction at Sarum College and a spiritual director who also leads reflective running retreats and pilgrimages. Katharine loves to journey alongside others in their life of faith; offering one-to-one accompaniment from home, online, or out walking or running in nature.

The transforming power of movement in nature came to her in mid-life and quickly became a spacious, reflective rhythm where the gentle pace and changing terrain help us listen, restore balance, and notice the quiet ways God speaks.

Katharine has a Masters degree in Intercultural studies from Fuller Seminary in California, USA and a BSC (Hons) from Durham University.

She has spent over 30 years working in small to medium charities, including Viva and The Space, supporting vulnerable children and young people. She and her family also spent seven years as wardens of Windsor Hill Wood, a Christian refuge in Somerset for people recovering from a time of crisis.

# Retreat – prodigal son

with Sue and Chris Monckton-Rickett

“God is looking into the distance for me, trying to find me, and longing to bring me home.”

– Henri Nouwen

“The Parable of the Prodigal Son” is one of the most familiar and well-loved of all of Jesus’ parables. In the Eastern Church it is known as the “The Parable of the Loving Father” and by looking at it from this perspective we can concentrate not so much on the depth of the lostness of the sons, but experience the depth of the love of the father and the desire for both sons to experience a sense of “home”.

We will draw in part upon Henri Nouwen’s book *The Return of the Prodigal Son* and his writings about his fascination with Rembrandt’s painting of the same name to help us explore the various aspects of the parable – homecoming, forgiveness, affirmation, reconciliation and restoration and how the love of Father (God) transforms us into His likeness.

The retreat will include some led teaching, Biblical meditations, music, relaxation, and reflective exercises. In each session there will also be time for private reflection perhaps using meditative exercises and creative materials that will be provided, silence, reading or even just resting.

This is about time for you, a time for God to run to meet you, to be refreshed, receive and experience “home”.

Just bring yourself and choose what you would like to do.

## About the trainers



Sue and Chris Monckton-Rickett are both Registered Accredited Counsellors and have been counselling for over 30 years, working creatively with clients including sandplay. Their organisation WINGS (Wholeness In God’s Son) seeks to bring wholeness to the lives of individuals, families and communities, through counselling, prayer ministry, retreat leading and training.

They have led many retreats, for ACC and other organisations both online and in-person. An important part of both their counselling work and retreat leading has been with people in Christian ministry and those in caring professions.



Sue and Chris Monckton-Rickett

# Prices and booking

Early bird by 15 July 2026

	Members	Non-members
Residential	£435	£475
Non-residential	£290	£320

Standard from 16 July 2026

	Members	Non-members
Residential	£475	£550
Non-residential	£320	£370

The conference will take place at **Kents Hill Park Training and Conference Centre, Timbold Drive, Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes, MK7 6BZ.**

We recommend reading our Terms and Conditions and Frequently Asked Questions on the next few pages before making your booking. Where possible, please book by debit card.

[Visit our website here](#) to book.

# Terms and conditions

1. The residential option includes:

- full access to conference
- refreshments
- ensuite accommodation on Friday and Saturday
- dinner on Friday
- breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday
- breakfast and lunch on Sunday
- access to [Nuffield Health](#) (fitness and wellbeing gym) onsite

The non-residential option includes:

- full access to conference
- refreshments
- dinner on Friday
- lunch and dinner on Saturday
- lunch on Sunday
- access to [Nuffield Health](#) (fitness and wellbeing gym) onsite

2. You will need to choose your training stream at the time of booking. You can change your choice of training stream before 31 August 2026 by emailing us at [office@acc-uk.org](mailto:office@acc-uk.org); after that, no change will be permitted.

3. If a training stream has less than six people signed up, ACC reserves the right to cancel the training stream. Those who have signed up for the training will be given the option to sign up for a different training stream.

4. Some training have a maximum number of participants; the spaces will be offered on a first come, first served basis.

5. At the time of publishing this programme, all training streams had been confirmed. However, in the event of unforeseen circumstances arising, ACC reserves the right to make necessary adjustments which may result in cancelling a training stream.

6. Any dietary requirements should be made clear at the time of booking on the booking form or by emailing us before 31 August 2026. If we are not notified by then, we regret that we will not be able to accommodate your dietary requirements.

7. In the event of you needing to cancel, the following policy will apply:

Cancellation prior to 30 June 2026, 50% of the fee paid is refundable.

Cancellation prior to 31 July 2026, 25% of the fee paid is refundable.

Cancellation on or after 1 August 2026, no refund will be made.



# Frequently asked questions

## **1. Where is the conference held? What are the dates?**

The conference will take place at Kents Hill Park Training and Conference Centre, Timbold Drive, Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes, MK7 6BZ, from Friday 2 October 2026 to Sunday 4 October 2026.

## **2. How does it work with training streams?**

The training streams take place on Saturday and Sunday in four sessions. They are continuous, not repeated, i.e. Sunday's training follows on from Saturday's. At the time of booking, you will need to choose **one** training stream to attend as part of the conference. If you would like to change to a different training stream after booking, you will need to let us know by 31 August 2026. After that, we regret we won't be able to make any changes.

## **3. I don't want to come for the whole conference. Can I just come for a day?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer the option to come for a day.

## **4. What time can I arrive on Friday 2 October?**

You can arrive from 2pm onwards on Friday.

## **5. What are the bedrooms like?**

All of the bedrooms have ensuite facilities. If you don't mind sharing a room, please indicate that on your booking form. However, we are not able to offer a discount for sharing a room.

## **6. I'm not sure if I want to come in person; do you offer live streaming?**

Unfortunately we are not able to offer live streaming this time.

## **7. What happens next once I have booked?**

Relax! Further information regarding the conference and training will be sent a few weeks before the conference. Please make sure your email address is correct at the time of booking and notify us if there is any change.

## **8. What if I need to cancel my booking?**

Please refer to our cancellation policy in the Terms and Conditions.





# Frequently asked questions

## **9. I need an accessible room. Is there any provision for that?**

The venue itself is accessible and therefore all plenary sessions, training sessions, and social places are accessible. If you need an accessible bedroom please email [office@acc-uk.org](mailto:office@acc-uk.org) before booking.

## **10. I have a dietary requirement. What do I do?**

Please make sure you let us know the details of your dietary requirement on the booking form or email us at [office@acc-uk.org](mailto:office@acc-uk.org). We need to know any dietary requirements before 31 August 2026.

## **11. What do I need to bring to the conference?**

Anything you need for the duration of the stay and what you need to make notes. As part of our commitment to becoming more environmentally friendly, we won't be providing paper copies of training handouts or conference timetable. They will be emailed to you beforehand. If you wish to have a paper copy of them with you at the conference, you will need to print them at home and bring them. Your certificate of attendance will be emailed to you afterwards.

## **12. How will the CPD hours be calculated on my certificate?**

The CPD hours include the keynote speech (1.5 hours), two plenary sessions (3 hours), Sunday service (1.5 hours) and training (6 hours). If you attend all of them, it is a total of 12 hours. After the conference, you will be provided with a form to fill in to inform us what you attended and will be issued a CPD certificate accordingly.

## **13. I have a question that is not covered here. What do I do?**

Please email us at [office@acc-uk.org](mailto:office@acc-uk.org) or call us on 02476 449 694 for any further questions.

