

King Charles III Coronation Medal Recipients May, 2025

Awarded on the recommendation of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation for outstanding service, especially in fostering mutual respect and understanding of different religious traditions, and/or furthering the positive contribution of faith communities, in Canadian civil society.

Gail Allan, Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action

Gail Allan participates in the North American Interfaith Network and chaired the planning committee that brought the annual NAIN Connect conference to Toronto in 2013. From 2014-2020 she was co-chair of the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee. She was involved in establishing the Christian Interfaith Reference Group of the Canadian Council of Churches, and served as chair for several years. Active in interfaith work since 1995, from 2004-2020 she was coordinator for interfaith relations in The United Church of Canada, representing the church in national and international interfaith groups, and supporting people engaged in dialogue and action in their local communities. Now living in Edmonton, she is an active member of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action, currently serving as president of the board.

Prof. Nouman Ashraf, University of Toronto

Through both his senior administrative duties as Director, Anti-racism and Cultural Diversity, and his academic responsibilities as Associate Professor within the Rotman School of Management, Nouman Ashraf has worked diligently to highlight the role that faith-based organizations have played in enabling social cohesion and innovation. He was instrumental in the founding of the University's Multi-Faith Centre for Spiritual Study and Practice. He has served as advisor to numerous organizations across sectors in moving the dialogue from mere tolerance and accommodation to meaningful engagement that yields a collective sense of belonging. He is recognized as a thought leader through work pioneering work on Emancipatory Leadership that twins both intellectual rigour and a dialogue-based approach pedagogy that informs the future of leadership development in a way that is inclusive of faith and spirituality.

Shaheen Ashraf, Canadian Council of Muslim Women

Shaheen Ashraf has provided tremendous leadership in both her own religious community and building bridges of understanding with other faith communities, especially regarding issues of religious freedom and addressing Islamophobia in Quebec. For several years she has served in a leadership capacity with the national Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW). She has represented the CCMW on the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee. She is a much sought after lecturer regarding Islam at churches, synagogues, temples and universities. She serves specifically with the Spirituality Centre of Concordia University.

Shaheen is a champion of religious literacy and especially noted for her work in developing Muslim-Sikh relations.

Shaheen is a stirring example of bringing her faith to bear on pressing social issues of the day, including the environment and is a member of the Montreal-based Raging Grannies and West Island Citizens Advocacy group. She provided important leadership during the Covid 19 Pandemic to bring diverse religious communities together to address issues of isolation and food

security. Shaheen is a past recipient of the Ambassador of Peace Award by the Universal Peace Federation.

Brice Balmer, Interfaith Grand River

For the past 35 years, Brice Balmer has brought people from different religions together for the greater good of various faith communities and the region. This started by obtaining Halal meats for the food hamper program, continued by creating times and places for interfaith dialogue, educating people about other faiths, creating counselors and counseling services which respected different spiritualities as part of healing, and advocating for changes which were needed to honour an ethnically and religiously diverse community. His work included beginning and leading Interfaith Grand River, traveling to Qom, Iran to teach and learn from Shi'a Imams, serving as secretary for Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, creating opportunities for people to meet neighbours of other faiths, writing essays, authoring, *Meeting Our Multi-Faith Neighbours* and co-authoring, *Persistent Poverty: Voices from the Margins*.

The Rev'd. Jeremy Bell, North American Baptist Fellowship

As part of his denominational leadership, The Rev'd. Jeremy Bell has participated in, led and sought out a wide cross-section of faith and inter-faith networks for over 40 years.

In collaboration with the BC Premier's office, Jeremy helped draw together over 70 multi-faith leaders in support of the Nisga'a Treaty process, co-chairing a gathering of Nisga'a elders with the Premier in a ceremony at the Museum of Anthropology.

In 2003, Jeremy founded HomeStart, which works in partnership with over 60 community and multi-faith organizations to furnish the homes of 1152 of secular, Muslim, and Christian refugees, at-risk women, youth and children annually.

Jeremy has served for over 19 years on the Interfaith Committee of Military Chaplains with Jewish, Muslim, Humanist, Indigenous and various Christian faith traditions that support Canadian military chaplains.

Throughout his career, Jeremy has sought to build bridges and strengthen ecumenical relationships. As lead of Western Canadian Baptists, he joined the Canadian Council of Churches; as General Secretary of the North American Baptist Fellowship, he led ecumenical initiatives in environmental responsibility, disaster relief, and in Baptist-Vatican dialogue.

The Rev'd. Dr. Andrew Bennett, CARDUS

From his time as Canada's Ambassador of Religious Freedom (2013-2016), the Rev'd. Dr. Andrew Bennett has occupied a central place in the national dialogue on freedom of religion and religion's role in the national conversation. As Ambassador, he formed an extensive network among faith leaders as he worked to defend religious freedom for their co-religionists facing persecution overseas. He brought together members of this network as the Cabinet of Canadians under Faith in Canada 150, highlighting religion's place in Canada as we celebrated 150 years of Confederation. As a Catholic deacon, he has a deep commitment to upholding the Catholic Church's responsibility to the Jewish people and defending them against antisemitism. His deep involvement with the Canadian Jewish community stems from his time as Head of the Canadian

Delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (2014-2016) and has continued through his leadership of the Canadian Christian Declaration on Antisemitism (2024).

Guy W. Blood, Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action

Guy W. Blood, M.Sc., P.Eng. has been a member of the Baha'i Faith since 1979, after an extensive search of all possibilities of committing to a spiritual path within a religious community. He has fostered respect and understanding of religious diversity through many initiatives.

Guy created and produced a half hour weekly television show entitled Unity in Religion. People from all faiths were interviewed using questions that focused on similarities rather than differences; it ran for three years.

Realizing that the other major force in the world is politics Guy also became an active member of the United Nations Association in Canada, Edmonton Branch, serving as President and as Prairies Vice President to the National Office. In Ottawa he became acquainted with a few Ambassadors to the UN and was instrumental in having the UN Secretary General invited to the Parliament of the World's Religions in 2015.

Locally Guy served as Vice President, President and is an active Past President with the Edmonton Interfaith Centre. From celebrating World Interfaith Harmony Week to creating a video promoting interfaith harmony, he supports the work of the Centre in many ways.

Barbara Boraks, Christian Jewish Dialogue of Toronto

As Executive Director, for almost 30 years, of the Christian Jewish Dialogue of Toronto, Barbara Boraks worked to develop projects which utilized faith-based insights and values, strengthened by contributions from a wide range of additional disciplines, to address issues of common social concern. These projects allowed people to share both their common and unique ideas and experiences. Programs that celebrate music, food, humor, and stories can bring people together and create bonds of understanding. By establishing this basis for understanding Barbara was also able to address challenging issues - issues of broader concern - such as Basic Income support as well as many other programs and projects which dealt with ethical, moral, and historic matters, of human rights and human wrongs and build a better society.

Dr. John Borrows, Victoria Multifaith Society

Dr. John Borrows is a former Chair of the Victoria Multifaith Society and has provided outstanding leadership as a frequent speaker and writer on the topic of Indigenous spirituality and religious reconciliation across Canada. John believes in the sacredness of nuance and urges others to seek peace and strength within their own spiritual practices as well as those of others. These teachings are woven into Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, classroom courses, court cases and community fora, through his writing, speaking and volunteer work. John is a member of the Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation in Ontario, Canada.

Fredelle Brief, North American Interfaith Network, World Council on Religions for Peace

Fredelle Brief has been a pivotal leader in interfaith dialogue, serving on multiple influential boards including the World Council on Religions for Peace (Canada), the International Association for Religious Freedom, and the North American Interfaith Network. Her leadership extended to the Advisory Board of the Ontario Science Centre, creating an exhibit addressing racism. She played key roles in organizations like the Canadian Jewish Congress and Christian/Jewish Dialogue of Toronto and others to address inter-communal issues. A notable achievement was her invitation from the Vatican to facilitate peace-building meetings between Israeli and Palestinian clerics prior to the Oslo Accords, representing Canada as an NGO delegate in the Amman conference on multi-religious peacebuilding in the Middle East.

Audrey Brooks, Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action

For over 30 years Audrey Brooks worked in community ministry with a focus on pastoral care and counselling as well as having taught in the Edmonton public school system. Her special interest is in ecumenism, believing that divisive boundaries caused by cultural and religious differences must be addressed and rectified through loving co-operation. Specifically, she facilitated the Edmonton Interfaith Centre's annual concert, Day of Peace celebrations and Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination commemorations as well as serving on the Edmonton Interfaith Housing Council. She served on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of the University of Alberta Interfaith Chaplains Association. Audrey sings with the Edmonton Raging Grannies, is involved with the Missing and Murdered Women and Girls advocacy campaigns and is a founding member of the University of Alberta Pride Alumni Association. In 2008 she inaugurated an annual Genocide Memorial Service.

M. Darrol Bryant, Ph.D., Interfaith Grand River

M. Darrol Bryant is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies and director of the Centre for Dialogue and Spirituality in World's Religions at Renison College, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. He is an internationally recognized scholar on interfaith dialogue and is the author of over a dozen books, including *Exploring Unification Theology* (coedited, 1978); *The Future of Anglican Theology* (1984); *The Many Faces of Religion and Society* (coedited, 1985); *Essays on World Religion* (coedited, 1995); and *Interreligious Dialogue: Voice from a New Frontier* (coedited, 1998). Professor Bryant has been a visiting scholar at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom; the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, New Delhi; the Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Studies in Philosophy, University of Madras, India; Hamdard University, New Delhi, India; and Nairobi University, Kenya. He is a long-standing member of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, the American Academy of Religion, the Canadian Theological Society and the Royal Asiatic Society. He has served as a consultant to major international and interreligious conferences, including the Assembly of the World's Religions.

In Canada Dr. Bryant has been an innovator in experiential education in postsecondary institutions. Thousands of students have benefited from his world religion courses gaining a strong foundational knowledge in both theology and practice. He is a leader in interfaith dialogue, with deep roots in the Kitchener-Waterloo region of Ontario expanding across the globe. He is a tireless advocate for religious understanding combatting anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other religious prejudices through empathic leadership creating safe spaces for

attentive listening and respect. He became the first recipient of the Dr. Huston Smith Award for Interfaith Education in 2010.

Dr. Geoffrey Cameron, Baha'i Community of Canada

Dr. Geoffrey Cameron provided critical leadership on the Executive of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation during its early, formative years. Specifically, Geoffrey worked with other religious leaders and civil society groups over the last 15 years to convene a series of national conferences, entitled, Our Whole Society – held from Montreal to Vancouver - to examine how to bridge the religious-secular divide in Canada.

Geoffrey has also worked with Parliamentarians and religious leaders to create an All-Party Parliamentary Interfaith Caucus, a ground-breaking initiative to stimulate cross-party dialogue about religion and public policy in Canada.

As Director of Public Affairs for the Baha'i Community of Canada, Geoffrey worked with faith and community leaders to create common support to uphold international religious freedom and support the rights of persecuted Baha'is in Iran.

Also working within postsecondary education Geoffrey has also contrived much to intellectual reflection and practical case samples on the role of religion in Canadian society. By way of example, he facilitated a series of public forums at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto on this subject in 2018 and 2019. In his 2021 book *Send Them Here*, Geoffrey explains the genesis and development of refugee resettlement policy in North America through the lens of the essential role played by faith-based organizations. He currently teaches at the University of Guelph.

Shaila Kibria Carter, Canadian Interfaith Conversation, Islamic Relief

Shaila Carter, started as VP Equity at University of Toronto Student Union advocating for social justice issues. She is an Ambassador of the largest Muslim relief organization in the country, Islamic Relief Canada, where she began as the first Executive Director. She has fundraised for Syrian refugees and marginalized Black youth, is committed to lifting up the voices of women, and has helped facilitate Muslim-Indigenous partnerships. She is the author of the book "Maariyah's Day", about a girl's experience being a Canadian Muslim. Shaila has also contributed as a freelance journalist to CBC Radio 1 about the multicultural tapestry in Canada. Shaila loves working with people of different cultures and religions and strives to build bridges. Shaila has been affirmed as the new Co-Chair for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2022.

Dr. Brian Carwana, Encounter World Religions

Brian Carwana is Executive Director of Encounter World Religions, a non-profit charity promoting religious literacy to the general public, schools, and workplaces. Over 25 years, he has led more than 3,500 visits to houses of worship enabling over 110,000 encounters that bridged ethno-religious boundaries by entering sacred spaces, observing ritual, hearing community leaders, and sharing meals. He works with diverse organizations including police, municipal and federal governments, universities, industry, and health care workers. Brian is a subject matter expert for the Canadian Centre of Diversity and Inclusion, an Advisor to the Crescent Centre for Boys Education, and served on the 2018 Parliament of World Religions steering committee. He

has done many media interviews advancing interfaith understanding and respect and holds a PhD from the University of Toronto in religion and politics.

Richard G. Chambers, Multi-Faith Centre, University of Toronto

From graduate studies at the Harvard University through to his current volunteer service with the Canadian Interfaith Conversation four decades later, Richard Chambers has been an articulate spokesperson for the positive contribution religious communities can make in the public arena. He has years of service in building consensus amongst faith communities and civil society partners, including various levels of government, to advance social justice policy. For 20 years Richard served in the national General Council Offices of The United Church of Canada co-ordinating policy initiatives for the common good on a variety of issues including environmental conservation, refugee policy and Indigenous Rights and serving on the board of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. He served as the inaugural Director of the Multi-Faith Centre for Spiritual Study and Practice at the University of Toronto from 2007-2021 partnering with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the North American Interfaith Network, the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, Interfaith Youth Core, Scarborough Missions and the Intercultural Dialogue Institute to advance student development in Canada's multifaith civil society.

Rick Ciaramitaro, Ministers Network Canada

For over 30 years, Rick Ciaramitaro together with his wife, Cathy, have developed faith-based ministries in Essex County, Ontario to respond to those struggling with alcohol and drug addictions, economic and mental health issues. This included founding Windsor Life Outreach for basic necessities for families in need and a 20 bed residential support centre for women struggling with addictions – a tremendous achievement and community asset. In addition Rick has modelled and mentored leaders in many other faith communities in making a positive contribution to civil society.

Bruce J. Clemenger, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Throughout his career, Bruce Clemenger has facilitated and promoted collaborative dialogue across Christian traditions and fostered engagement in multi-faith conversations and coalitions on a variety of themes and initiatives, leading by respect, understanding, and civil dialogue.

Bruce has nurtured extensive national and international networks and engaging in collaborative initiatives involving the widest possible range of faith traditions and leaders on issues such as education, care for the vulnerable, civil discourse and religious freedom. For 32 years he has served as a senior leader of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, a national ecumenical organization (including 20 years as President/CEO), bringing together over 150 denominations, national ministry organizations and institutions of higher learning, establishing three Centres fostering conversation and collaborative initiatives, including interfaith statements and court interventions in support of religious accommodation and freedom.

Bruce has served on the Interfaith Committee for Canadian Military Chaplaincy since 2012 and as an Executive member of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation since 2020. In 2023 he received the Victor Goldbloom award for Outstanding Interfaith Leadership from the national Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. He is an award-winning author.

The Hon. Dr. Irwin Cotler, PC., OC., OQ. Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism

Dr. Cotler recalls that his Father taught him that the pursuit of justice is equal to all the other commandments combined, and this, as his Father put it, must be one life's legacy. This has been his abiding inspiration and life commitment since.

Dr. Cotler identifies that one of his most rewarding initiatives both as MP and Minister of Justice and Attorney General was to convene the faith communities together in common cause, in the pursuit of justice. In that regard, he tabled the first-ever National Justice Initiative Against Racism and Hate, when Justice Minister, and the establishment of a Council of National Security, co-chaired by a Jew and a Muslim, who were the two main targets of discrimination and hate at the time. He continues to advocate on this front, believing it is now more urgent than ever before, understanding that at times such as these, *qui s'excuse s'accuse*: whoever remains indifferent indicts himself or herself.

Diane Dwarka, The Manitoba Multifaith Council

Diane Dwarka actively engages in local, provincial and national organizations and has been president of many including the Community Legal Education Association (opened a pathway by being the first non-lawyer president), Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education, Women's Inter- Church Council of Canada, Red River College Alumni, and the Council of Caribbean Organizations of Manitoba. She is a board member of Marshall McLuhan Initiative, and Chair, Board of Regents, St. Andrews Theological College Board of Regents as well as active in many governance bodies of the United Church of Canada.

For helping to create a more humane society, she has received many awards including a YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Award; Red River College Distinguished Alumnus Award; Premier's Award for Volunteerism; Public Legal Education Award; B'nai Brith Human Rights Award; Canadian Race Relations "Community Champion Award"; the ANSAR award from ISSA Inc.; was 2014 Folklorama Ambassador General; was humbled to receive an "eagle feather" for involvement in Indigenous education.

Acharya Shrinath Prasad Dwivedi, Multi-Faith Summit Council of BC

Acharya Dwivedi has been very active promoting inter-religious harmony and literacy in British Columbia since joining the Multifaith Action Society in 2010 where he has served in a variety of leadership positions, including President. He is a founding member and active participant of the Surrey Interfaith Council that promotes the principles of unity in diversity, harmonious development, co-existence, and love for others. From 2012 to 2021, Acharya organized local events for the "World Interfaith Harmony Week" with support of a diverse cross-section of faith leaders in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. He has also provided leadership with the Hindi Literary Society of Canada, The South Asian Literary Society and The Global Hindu Foundation and serves on the Multi-Faith Summit Council of BC. Prior to his provincial work, and continuing, Acharya Dwivedi has been very active internationally representing Canada at the World Parliament of Religions. He chaired the organizing committee of Pre- Parliament of World's Religions for several Parliaments. The Parliament fosters inter-religious and cross-cultural dialogue on important local, nation and global issues and encourages participation by

diverse faith communities. Acharya participated in the 1999, 2009, 2015, 2018 and 2023 Parliament of the World's Religions and presented papers there in 1999, 2009 and 2015. At the Parliament in 2009, Acharya became the first Canadian to be appointed as a Peace Ambassador.

Hector Acero Ferrer, Canadian Interfaith Conversation

For more than a decade, Héctor Acero Ferrer has dedicated his scholarly and community work to creating spaces for interfaith and intercultural understanding at the intersection of community and academia. As Director of Lifelong Learning at the Institute for Christian Studies, he works to foster meaningful, cross-sector dialogue about the role of faith in society.

From 2013-2017, Héctor led Scarboro Foreign Missions' Youth in Dialogue initiative providing educational support to Greater Toronto Area youth interfaith leaders. This initiative culminated with establishing the Scarboro Foreign Missions Chair in Inter-Religious Dialogue at Regis College, the University of Toronto.

Since 2016, Héctor is on faculty at Martin Luther University College, where he developed the BA in Christianity, Interfaith Dialogue, and Community Engagement, the first program of its kind in Canada. At Luther, he teaches courses on intersectionality, interfaith, and youth engagement.

Recipient of the 2018 Award for Service to Interfaith Dialogue (City of Toronto), Héctor has been a member of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation since 2017 where he has been instrumental in the planning and execution of their biennial Our Whole Society conferences. Additionally, Héctor has served as a Board member of The Parliament of the World's Religions (Toronto, 2018), the North American Interfaith Network, and The Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Toronto.

With his attuned listening skills, empathetic understanding, critical thinking skills, experience in navigating religious diversity and boundless enthusiasm, Héctor is an outstanding model of how to foster interfaith understanding and facilitate meaningful contributions to civil society by religious communities.

Dr. Gerald Filson, Baha'i Community of Canada

Gerald Filson served as Director of Public Affairs with the Baha'i Community of Canada for 25 years beginning in 1993. During this period, he forged innumerable interfaith partnerships to advance the common good in Canadian civil society. He was a member from 1993 to 2002, of the Mosaic Management Group of VisionTV. He served two terms on the Board of Directors of the Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs and was the Chair of its National Conference in 2006 and 2007.

Gerald also served as Chair of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation from 2012 to 2016 doing so with a view of accepting all of Canada's religions in a pluralistic Canada, exercising patience, friendship and fellowship with all the religious representatives no matter their diversity. During his time as Chair major national conferences were held at McGill University in 2013 and the University of British Columbia in 2015 that brought together many representatives of both religious organizations and non-religious organizations. The conferences considered how

insights from diverse experiences and traditions of thought can shed light on the contribution religion makes, both positive and negative, to the many challenges Canada currently faces. During his tenure meetings were held with Members of Canada's Parliament, always urging them to work harder and better for the good of all Canadians of whatever faith or no faith. His education includes a Ph.D. (Toronto), M.A. (Concordia) and B.A (Saskatchewan).

Andrea Salguero Florian, Baha'i Community of Canada

Andrea Salguero Florian is a board member of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation (CIC), Canada's foremost national interfaith organization, representing the Baha'i Community of Canada where she is Director of Public Affairs. In this role she regularly engages in strategic planning and supports programming that fosters dialogue about the contribution of religion to Canadian public life. She provides leadership to the All-Party Parliamentary Interfaith Caucus, a non-partisan CIC-initiated caucus which explores faith-related subjects of shared concern among parliamentarians. She also provides leadership for the planning and development of the CIC's biennial 'Our Whole Society' conference since 2015. This national conference explores the contribution of religion to Canadian society. Prior conference themes include: bridging the religious-secular divide; religion and citizenship; finding common ground in a time of polarization; and the role of religion in fostering hope.

Andrea brings to her faith-based advocacy for the common good several advocacy and legal research roles in international and domestic human rights law including a clerkship at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in San Jose, Costa Rica and previously worked at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Andrea holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A), and joint Bachelor of Civil Law (B.C.L.) / Juris Doctor (J.D.) degrees from McGill University. She is a licensed lawyer in the province of Ontario.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, C.M., Toronto Board of Rabbis

Baruch Frydman-Kohl, C.M., is a leader in interfaith dialogue throughout Canada. The Rabbi hosted faith leaders of different traditions in Beth Tzedec Congregation and has spoken in mosques, churches, and gatherings of Muslim youth. He initiated and co-led several multi-faith study missions to Israel and Palestine, and helped to organize interfaith building for Habitat for Humanity. Part of the Planning Committee for the Parliament of World's Religions held in Toronto, he was honoured by the North Toronto Interfaith Group and by the Canadian Council of Imams. Rabbi Frydman-Kohl was one of the initiators of the multi-faith Memorial and Solidarity Vigil for the victims of the Yonge Street vehicle violence and helped organize Rings of Peace around Muslim and Catholic places of worship in response to terrorist attacks. A member of the Canadian Catholic-Jewish Consultation, he is also the author of a history of Catholic-Jewish relations in Toronto.

Glendyne Gerrard, Defend Dignity

Through volunteering in her local community, Glendyne Gerrard first met sexually exploited and trafficked women and children. Moved by the growing awareness that sexual exploitation undermines human dignity and is more widespread than she knew, she started a ministry in her faith community to come alongside exploited women and children through financial aid; to raise awareness across Canada through events, videos and curriculum; and to advocate for better laws and policies with all levels of government to end this crisis. The ministry expanded to include

multiple faith communities, survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and the general public and Defend Dignity is now a national charity working to end all forms of sexual exploitation in Canada.

Shari Golberg, University of Toronto

Shari Golberg is Assistant Director, Faith & Anti-racism at the University of Toronto, providing guidance on matters where race and religious/spiritual identities intersect. With a PhD in Religion, she has taught courses and workshops across Ontario in post-secondary, public sector, and corporate environments on religious accommodation, antisemitism and Islamophobia, and creating inclusive workplace cultures. She has served as a researcher, facilitator, policy advisor, and community organizer for the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, the Ontario Public Service, and the 2018 Toronto Parliament of World Religions. For eight years, she facilitated *Shema & Iqra: The Jewish-Muslim Text Project*, a grassroots initiative which collaborated with over 20 organizations, bringing Toronto-based Muslims and Jews together to explore issues of mutual concern, build trust, and promote understanding across difference.

Jonquil Hallgate, Surrey Interfaith Council

Jonquil Hallgate, a founding member of the Surrey Interfaith Council, has spear-headed multi-faith forums, events, and activities, including World Interfaith Harmony Week and partnering with the Women's Interfaith Council of BC. Jonquil invites neighbours into diverse places of worship, demonstrating the importance of welcoming and inclusion. Over 20 years she has contributed to the building of interfaith relationships across the city. A keystone to her interfaith work is to collaborate around understanding social issues including managing a faith-based Mission, an important component of her faith journey. Jonquil believes building awareness of social challenges including poverty, homelessness, mental health wellness and addiction is an integral component of how people of faith ought to live. Consequently, Jonquil has been an articulate spokesperson for many years in bringing understanding of how to put faith into action.

Adele Halliday, The United Church of Canada

Adele Halliday brings personal passion and a deep dedication to diversity as an experienced faith-based anti-racism educator. She has been involved in anti-oppression work with faith communities for more than 15 years and is committed to working towards systemic change as well as creating better places of belonging for people of all identities in faith communities and civil society.

As The United Church of Canada's Anti-Racism and Equity Lead, Adele envisioned and led the 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism. This innovative online program offers opportunities for learning, faith reflections, and ideas for anti-racism action and advocacy. Over the years, church denominations across the world, different interfaith groups, government workers, and individuals drew on the resources for action.

A sought-after speaker, Adele has led anti-racism keynotes and workshops across Canada and the United States for diverse faith communities, including the Our Whole Society Conference at Wilfrid Laurier University sponsored by the Canadian Interfaith Conversation in 2003. She led the United Church's work on intercultural ministries: creating policies, programs, and national directions. Adele is the co-moderator of the World Council of Churches' Reference Group on

Overcoming Racism and Xenophobia. Adele's work inspires people in faith communities to deepen understandings and take anti-racist actions.

The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, Canadian Interfaith Conversation

The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton is a long-term leader in a wide variety of international, national, regional and local interfaith and ecumenical realities and creative initiatives. She served as Canada's second longest serving General Secretary of The Canadian Council of Churches, representing more than 85% of the Christians in this country from 2002 to 2017. During this period, she provided exceptional leadership reaching out beyond the Christian communities in Canada to building lasting relationships with a wide spectrum of other faith communities, especially Jewish communities to foster understanding and work together to address social justice issues. Examples of this include her work in bringing a faith-based response, with Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Indigenous leaders together in a World Religions Summit to advocate for economic and environmental justice and peace, in conjunction with the hosting of the G8 by the Canadian government in 2010. This event, along with the developing of regular opportunities for representatives of Canada's faith communities to meet regarding a variety of social justice concerns was a catalyst for interfaith cooperation leading to the creation of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation, an ongoing forum to discern and the advance the role of religious communities contributing to the common good in Canadian civil society.

In 2018 Dr. Hamilton Co-Chaired the Parliament of the World's Religions bringing 8000 participants for the Parliament's first time in Canada. That latter initiative was awarded a global prize for 'Best Practices in Interfaith Dialogue' by the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue based in Qatar. She has also Chaired the Canadian Christian Jewish Consultation. She co-Created and co-teaches an interfaith course for Jews, Christians and Muslims in Israel and Palestine and is the author of Canada's first interfaith social justice book, *Faith As Protest: Answering the Call to Mend the World*, published in 2023. She has helped sponsor Syrian and Afghan Muslim refugee families and organized and spoken at numerous ecumenical and interfaith panels, workshops and presentations including preaching in Rome.

The Rev'd. Dr. Rob Hankinson, North American Interfaith Network

Rob Hankinson has an ongoing commitment to inter-church and interfaith efforts and continues to offer support for programmes and activities seeking social justice beginning with his ministry in Alberta in 1973. Amongst many initiatives and accomplishments, in 1985 Rob was a member of the first Canada- USSR ecumenical study tour. He served as Chair of the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Board, University of Alberta from 1980 to 1983. He was a founding member of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action in 1995. In 2008 Rob was appointed Secretary of the North American Interfaith Network and in 2012 Rob was elected Chair. Since relocating to Nova Scotia in 2019 Rob was elected Secretary of the Wolfville Area Inter-church Council in 2022 and is currently heading up the committee to host North American Interfaith Network in Wolfville, Nova Scotia in August 2025. In the summer of 2024 Rob was appointed Co-Chair of the Acadia University Chaplaincy Committee. Personal interactions have been the highlights of his ecumenical journey thus far and he is grateful for what he has been given and am able to share.

Ray Harris, Manitoba Multifaith Council

As a Salvation Army officer, Ray Harris, together with his wife Cathie, he has served in different Canadian contexts, from Fort McMurray in Alberta to St John's NL. This has exposed him to different cultures and expressions of religious faith. His appointments with The Salvation Army included congregational leadership, College teaching and denominational administration. It has been his privilege to serve for a brief time on the board of the Canadian Council of Churches. In retirement he brought his Salvationist convictions into service on the Manitoba Multifaith Council, and to help realize its mission. Teaching opportunities enabled him to help Salvation Army officers develop a theology of interfaith work in this pluralistic world. Working with the Jewish led Operation Ezra enabled him to connect Salvation Army resources to the task of Yazidi resettlement. It is his conviction that all of these experiences have helped to deepen his own Christian faith and serve the present age.

Dr. Krishan Kapila, Multifaith Saskatchewan

Dr. Krishan Kapila has been a leader in the multifaith community of Saskatchewan for several decades travelling the length and breadth of the province with a particular emphasis in Regina, but also a host of other communities including Saskatoon and from Craik to Yorkton. He was instrumental in founding the Regina Multifaith Forum as well as the provincial group Multifaith Saskatchewan. He has served on the board of both organizations and developed numerous programs and networks promoting religious literacy and understanding.

Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Kapila is known widely for his leadership of the Visual Arts Project (VAP), an arts-based programme which invited high school students across Saskatchewan to submit their paintings, drawings, or photography to a juried competition. Financial awards were provided, and a provincial tour of the artworks was facilitated by Dr. Kapila. The VAP invites students to consider issues of faith, spirituality, justice, peace and environmental sustainability.

Zul Kassamali, Toronto Area Interfaith Council, Canadian Interfaith Conversation

Zul Kassamali has been instrumental in the leadership of the Toronto Area Interfaith Council where he has served as President since 2012. With his mentorship the Council has become a critical locus for not only for religious literacy and understanding, but an important catalyst for faith communities to learn about and advocate for a variety of pressing social issues in civil society, such as the reduction of poverty. Zul was instrumental in bringing the Parliament of Religions to Canada in 2018 and Co-Chaired the Parliament. He Co-Chaired the Canadian Interfaith Conversation from 2016 to 2022 overseeing many initiatives including several national conferences as well as several meetings with Members of Parliament on a variety of social policy issues for the common good. Zul continues to chair and serve on the boards of a variety of community service organizations such as the RCMP Diversity Council, the Multicultural Council for Ontario Seniors and the Canadian Foundation of Asian Culture to name just a few. He is also currently President of The National Alliance for the Advancement of Pluralistic Societies since 2012.

Umair Khan, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Canada

Umair Khan serves as a Missionary with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Canada and has provided leadership beginning in 2012 with communities in Sierra Leone (West Africa), Calgary,

Jamaica (Caribbean), and Vancouver. Umair is currently serving as a Missionary for the community at the Mubarak Mosque in Brampton, Ontario.

Mr. Khan's ministry has been characterized by a consistent commitment to building just societies in Canada and abroad. Wherever he has served he has built strong voluntary organizations committed to fostering peace and understanding that can respond practically to local humanitarian needs. During the Covid Pandemic he mobilized and modeled youth groups providing logistical and moral support to isolated individuals.

For over a decade Mr. Khan has organized numerous educational conferences and programmes (Strathmore, AB, 2014, Lethbridge, AB, 2015, St. Catherine, Jamaica, 2015, Prince George, BC, 2019, Okanagan, BC, 2020, Victoria, BC, 2021, Bradford, ON, 2022 amongst others) exploring religious expression in Canada fostering inter-religious understanding both with people of faith and no faith. His work engages people of all ages, with a particular appeal to young adults. He has been invited to speak with students at various postsecondary institutions across Canada. He is an advocate of religious literacy, promoting World Interfaith Harmony Week and fostering an understanding of Islam and combatting Islamophobia.

Chander Khanna, Toronto Area Interfaith Council

Inspired by Unifying Streams underlying our diverse belief systems, Chander Khanna has devoted his energies in organising Canada Day celebrations involving major faith traditions, monthly ecumenical Meditations & serving on Boards of interfaith organisation serving the common good. Specifically, Chander played a critical role in securing Toronto's bid for the Parliament of World Religions holding its 125th Anniversary in Toronto, and later serving as Vice Chair on the Board. As an interfaith facilitator one his most satisfying privileges is to organise special Canada Day celebrations - six in recent years at the University of Toronto's Multi-Faith Centre. He has served with the Toronto Area Interfaith Council, organizing the Mayor of Toronto's Interfaith Prayer Breakfasts, Vice President with the Hindu Institute of Learning and informal champion of the Interfaith World Harmony Week celebrations in the Greater Toronto Area.

Dr. Emanuel Kolyvas, Canadian Center for Ecumenism

As a person of faith and medical professional, Dr. Kolyvas has combined two of his passions in service to the community.

Rooted in his local community Dr. Kolyvas has served as President of the Fellowship of Saint John The Compassionate, Sign of the Theotokos Orthodox Church for 24 years. He has also served as Board Member of the Mile End Community Mission for 20 years, a service organization devoted to offering economic and medical relief to the marginalized in the Montreal area. He is also a member of the Patients' Advocacy Committee of the McGill University Health Centre. In all this work he is an advocate for bridgebuilding and peace.

Nationally Dr. Kolyvas serves as a Board Member of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism committed to providing ecumenical and interfaith information to schools, governments, corporations and other organizations, through conferences, consultations and workshops. Specifically he is also a Member of the Interreligious Forum for Peace focussing on both popular

education opportunities and academic reflection on interfaith dialogue and peace building. Dr. Kolyvas has also contributed his medical expertise for several years serving on the national Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group of the Canadian Council of Churches. His commitment to these endeavours reflects a heartfelt and effective commitment to promoting religious literacy in Canada.

Dr. Ron A. Kuipers, The Institute for Christian Studies

Dr. Ron A. Kuipers serves as the President of the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) as well as the Director of the ICS's Centre for Philosophy, Religion & Social Ethics, and Professor of Philosophy of Religion. Dr. Kuipers joined the ICS Faculty in 2004. In a volunteer capacity Dr. Kuipers has served as a consultant with the Canadian Interfaith Conversation national conference series entitled, *Our Whole Society*. As a member of the academy and community volunteer Dr. Kuipers has made an outstanding contribution to our understanding of the role of religion and faith communities' contributions to the common good in Canadian society.

Dr. Kuipers' academic research in the philosophy of religion treats issues of liberalism, secularism, and religious pluralism in Western societies, and asks how this cultural context shapes the different ways that religion comes to expression in Canada today. An excellent example of which is his essay "From Liberal Containment to Pluralistic Engagement: Religious Pluralism, Solidarity, and the Public Life of Canadian Democracy," published in a special issue of *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* (63/2/2024) on the theme 'Envisioning Canada'. In addition to numerous other articles Dr. Kuipers is the author of several books, including *Critical Faith: Toward a Renewed Understanding of Religious Life and its Public Accountability* (Rodopi, 2002) and *Richard Rorty* (Bloomsbury, 2013).

One of Dr. Kuipers' primary contributions to interfaith understanding in Canada is through the volunteer planning and leadership roles he has played in the Canadian Interfaith Conversation's biennial *Our Whole Society Conference*. He has served as a speaker, keynote interviewer, workshop leader, and, in 2023, as Lead Investigator for a successful Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Connection Grant application.

Vivian Kwok, Interfaith Circle, North American Interfaith Network, the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee, the Toronto Area Interfaith Council

Vivian Kwok has provided outstanding volunteer leadership with a number of interfaith organizations, including the North American Interfaith Network, the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee, the Toronto Area Interfaith Council, serving on the 2018 Steering Committee of the Parliament of World's Religions and founder of Interfaith Circle which strives to build mutually supportive and long-lasting friendships between people of different faith traditions (and not faith) through dialogue, prayer, and service. For several years Vivian provided critical support with the Ecumenical and Interfaith Office of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto.

Dr. Debbie Lou Ludolph, Inshallah Community Choir

As founder of the Kanata Centre at Martin Luther University College, Debbie Lou creates opportunities to develop and participate in prayer, art, and song practices that are woven with the richness of diverse cultures and faiths. She invites public expression of spirituality and religion

toward the goal of deepening understanding and working for the common good. This includes lamenting tragedies together, expressing joy, celebrating difference, and advocating for peace with justice.

Since 2007, Debbie Lou has directed a 140+ singing community, Inshallah, that intentionally embraces diverse expressions of spirituality and nurtures an embodied response to polarization through stories and songs. Engaging with Indigenous drumming circles, Muslim, Jewish, Bahai, Hindu, and Buddhist musicians, she has facilitated singing the circle wide to engage difference and singing the journey deep to find common humanity. Her academic research explores the way in which singing together shapes worldview; she has published two songbooks to share this work (2016, 2024), led community and conference gatherings, and developed university courses that deepen critical self-awareness by encountering difference.

Janet MacLennan, Interfaith Harmony Halifax

Janet MacLennan has been a pillar of the Interfaith Harmony Halifax Community for more than a decade, working both as Chair and behind the scenes to ensure interfaith relationships are built between communities within our city. The purpose of Interfaith Harmony Halifax is to spread harmony through promoting love of God – or the good- and love of neighbour. Specifically, Janet has provided critical leadership in organizing World Interfaith Harmony Week each February. She has also provided leadership in her own community, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, serving as a Temple Matron from 1999 to 2004.

Fr. Damian MacPherson, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto

Fr. Damian MacPherson has devoted the greater part of his adult life to promoting mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration among diverse religious traditions. His tireless advocacy for the role of religion in a pluralistic society and his deep commitment to interfaith dialogue have significantly contributed to the enrichment of Canada's multicultural fabric. Fr. Damian's is a founding member and the inaugural President of the Toronto Area Interfaith Council, where his visionary leadership laid the foundation for the Council's continued success in promoting interreligious harmony. In 1999 Fr. Damian became the first Director of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs for the Archdiocese of Toronto, a position he held for 18 years and during which time he forged the first Interfaith Prayer Breakfast with the then Mayor of Toronto, David Miller.

Richard Marceau, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs

For 13 years, Richard Marceau coordinated the organized Jewish community's varied efforts in interfaith and intercultural relations. He serves on the national dialogue between the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' Canadian Rabbinic Caucus; the Canadian Jewish participant in the Hartman Institute's North American Muslim Leadership Initiative; initiated an interfaith program at the University of Toronto addressing the rise in online hate targeting Jewish and Hindu communities. At the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs he serves as the central Jewish contact for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and liaise with other mainline Protestant churches as well as consulting for the Canadian Interfaith Conversation. He authored the award-winning book, *Juif: Une histoire québécoise*, and its English-language adaptation, *A Quebec Jew*, to explain to Quebecers and Canadians what the Jewish community, Judaism, and Israel represent.

Sherry Marceil, Multi-Faith Summit Council of British Columbia

Over the past decade, Sherry Marceil helped rebuild the leadership of the Surrey Interfaith Council, created multi-faith partnerships to host interfaith events during World Interfaith Harmony Week, produced six Interfaith Concerts, established the Women's Interfaith Council of BC, served as chair of the Multi-Faith Summit Council of BC, where she initiated an All-Party Interfaith Caucus, expanded the council's membership, developed the Resources page on the council's website, encouraged the development of a Multi-Faith Resource Manual for BC Educators and participated in introducing it at the Province-wide Professional Development Day. Sherry continues to serve as the Outreach Chair and Co-Chair of the Environment Committee. Part of her responsibilities as Past Chair is to represent the MFSCBC at Canadian Interfaith Conversation. She has also spoken at a Western Canada Peace Summit, and at a Vancouver School of Theology's Annual Conference on the Relevance of Faith-Based Organizations under the conference theme of Religion & Thoughtful Activism. Sherry has become a vital communication point to bring about multi-faith partnerships for various projects.

Dr. Ingrid Mattson, Huron University College, Western University

After a distinguished career as an interfaith leader in civil society and in academia in the United States, in 2012, she returned to Canada to be appointed the inaugural London & Windsor Community Chair in Islamic Studies at Huron University, where she developed interfaith programming and courses in the Faculty of Theology, especially for pastoral and spiritual care students. In her capacity as a Muslim scholar, she has helped lead Canadian Muslims to understand their ethical obligation to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to establish neighborly relationships with Indigenous communities. She has published, from an interfaith perspective and in dialogue with other faiths, on a range of topics including bioethics, religion and the public square, human rights, peace-building, and creation-care.

Bishop Scott McCaig, Roman Catholic Military Ordinariate of Canada

As Bishop of the Military Ordinariate of Canada, Scott McCaig has defended the religious conscience rights of all military members, privately and publicly. As member of the Interfaith Committee for Canadian Chaplaincy Services he has publicly promoted an "open neutrality" of the state which allows for the free expression of the multiple religious, non-religious and spiritual traditions, and helped facilitate the inclusion of new religious and non-religious traditions into the Canadian Armed Forces. As a Canadian religious leader, he has written and spoken publicly in support of religious tolerance, supporting groups experiencing misunderstanding and persecution. As a past member of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Ecumenical and Inter religious Committee he assisted in dialogue with diverse religious groups to bring about deeper understanding and cooperation for the good of society.

Neil McKenzie, Multi-Faith Summit Council of British Columbia

As a founding member of the Multi-Faith Summit Council of British Columbia and having assumed a leadership role early in the existence of the council, Neil McKenzie helped provide important focus and direction with the organization. He was instrumental in recruiting members that had the skills to advance the position of all faiths within society. He travelled to meet multiple Ministers of the Legislative Assembly in the provincial government regarding a variety

of social issues in pursuit of the common good. The Council's message to government was the importance of including all faith traditions to sustain a healthy and vigorous society. He initiated regular input from faith communities into current legislation as an aid to the government in serving the citizens of British Columbia. His primary focus was on advocacy inclusive of all faith traditions.

Leslie Mezei, Interfaith Unity

Leslie Mezei was instrumental in founding the Toronto Area Interfaith Council and served as its first Secretary. For several years he published the *Interfaith Unity* newsletter, an important networking tool of interfaith organizations, programmes and events in the Greater Toronto Area and across Canada. He is a Cherag (Minister) of the Universal Worship Service of the Universal Inayati Sufi Order International and an active member of the Sufi Way International/The Open Path. Leslie is a Holocaust survivor of the Second World War. He has responded to the current crises of our world by facilitating symposiums, offering outstanding video material and interactive experiences to bring about a human presence on Earth that is environmentally sustainable, socially just, and spiritually fulfilling. He is the author of *A Tapestry of Survival* (2019). He plays *Zikers* (chants) on a *ney* (bamboo flute).

Archbishop Michael Miller, Multi-Faith Summit Council of British Columbia

Archbishop Michael Miller has served as a senior member at the Vatican for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People before becoming the archdiocese's chief shepherd of over 400,000 Catholics of different ethnic groups. He has established new offices for First Nations Ministry, Hispanic Ministry, Filipino Ministry, Chinese Ministry, Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations. He is committed to fighting racism and anti-Semitism. He co-founded the Multifaith Summit Council-BC. He promoted interfaith clinical pastoral education. He worked alongside other local faith leaders and the mayor to address Vancouver's Downtown Eastside challenges. He stands with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in support of Bill C-15, federal legislation endorsing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He entered into a Sacred Covenant in 2024 with the Tkemlúps te Secwépemc people to foster healing and reconciliation.

Dr. John Milloy, Centre for Public Ethics, Martin Luther University College

As the Director of the Centre for Public Ethics at Martin Luther University College, John Milloy has drawn upon his experience as a former politician and as an academic to work for greater understanding between Canada's diverse faith communities and between these communities and the wider public.

From 2003 to 2014 John served as the member of provincial parliament (MPP) for Kitchener Centre, holding five cabinet portfolios. Prior to this he worked on Parliament Hill as a political adviser to a number of senior cabinet ministers as well as spending five years on the senior staff of former prime minister Jean Chrétien.

In addition to his book, *Faith and Politics Matter*, Novalis, 2015, John has spoken and written widely on the intersection between politics and religion. Working in the field of public ethics his research makes a unique and important contribution to the question of how people of faith — as elected officials, advocates and voters — approach the complicated world of politics.

John has provided outstanding leadership with the national series of conferences facilitated with the Canadian Interfaith Conversation, chairing the Planning Committee and hosting the *Our Whole Society Conference: Finding Common Ground in a Time of Polarization* at Martin Luther University College at Wilfrid Laurier University in 2023.

John completed his undergraduate education at Carleton University in Ottawa and received an MA in International History from the London School of Economics, and a DPhil in Modern History from the University of Oxford.

Mgr. Pierre Murray, Table interreligieuse de concertation du Québec

Mgr. Murray has distinguished himself through his unwavering commitment and leadership in serving the religious communities of the province of Quebec during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly through the creation and smooth running of the Interfaith Table. Under his leadership, the Interfaith Table became a model of collaboration and mutual respect, providing each participant with a space where their perspective was heard and considered. This inclusive and respectful approach helped strengthen ties between faith communities, while fostering open and constructive dialogue.

In addition, Mgr. Murray effectively worked with public health authorities and the Government of Quebec to develop and validate a protocol for the safe reopening of places of worship. Through his efforts, he not only ensured the safety of the faithful, but also helped to highlight the importance of spiritual accompaniment during this difficult time. His commitment to collective well-being is a testament to his deep sense of duty and dedication to the community.

After the critical phase of the pandemic, Mgr. Murray continued his work to highlight and promote the contribution of various religious groups to the common good. He has demonstrated how interreligious dialogue can be a powerful lever for solidarity and community support.

Muneeb Nasir, National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee

Muneeb Nasir is a prominent Muslim leader and interfaith advocate. He has significantly contributed to fostering understanding and cooperation among diverse religious communities.

Nasir's commitment to interfaith dialogue was evident in his role as Co-Chair of the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee and his service on the Toronto Steering Committee of the Parliament of the World's Religions. He also founded a public foundation to support various causes, including disability rights, environmental protection, interfaith initiatives, and anti-racism efforts. Additionally, he has led projects that brought faith communities together to sponsor refugee families and support food banks.

Through his leadership and initiatives, Nasir has played a crucial role in creating a more inclusive and harmonious society in Canada and inspired countless individuals to embrace peace and compassion.

Janet Noel-Annable, Karis Disability Services

For more than 36 years, 14 as Chief Executive Officer, of Karis, Janet Noel-Annable has understood that faith communities in Canada play a crucial role in fostering belonging in society. Channeling this understanding into support services and affordable housing she has supported people with disabilities focussing on employment, volunteering, and inclusion as well as shelter. Her faith and the values on which Karis is grounded see people with disabilities not as recipients of charity or benevolence, but as co-citizens, contributing and participating in society. Together with almost 4,000 team members and volunteers, Janet provides critical leadership in facilitating services and work to enable faith communities to be places where people with disabilities and their families find meaning and belonging in profound ways.

Peter Noteboom, Canadian Council of Churches, Canadian Interfaith Conversation

Peter Noteboom has advanced interfaith understanding and the contribution of faith communities to the common good in civil society as Co-Chair of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation, General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches and is also active in several community, human rights, peacebuilding, environmental and social justice organizations. A believer in a better world, Peter's life work has been to build peace one step, one relationship at a time. As a program leader, community organizer and learning facilitator he knows how important it is for people to participate, join in the process of change, and make decisions together. He knows how to navigate differences and build unity in ecumenical and interfaith settings. He has a post-graduate diploma on Dialogue and Negotiation from Simon Fraser University, has done post graduate studies on Christian Political Theory at the Institute for Christian Studies, has a Master of Arts degree in European Studies from the Catholic University of Leuven, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy and business administration from Dordt College, Iowa. He is supported in his community service by his life partner, Jeanette Romkema.

Sandra Pallin, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

As National Communications Director for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and a licensed immigration lawyer, Sandra has a genuine appreciation and respect for diversity. Her professional and volunteer work has been advocating for inclusivity, peace and understanding in cultural and/or religious difference. Through public speaking, conference leadership, partner coalitions, collaborative interfaith work, discussions with elected officials, joint public statements, community support, and a belief that all are beloved sons and daughters of God, Sandra looks for opportunities to engage with Canada's diverse faith community and to support their good works. In particular, Sandra has provided tireless support as Treasurer and Executive member of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation and on the planning committee of its biannual Our Whole Society conferences.

Dr. Marion Pardy, Religious Social Action Council Newfoundland and Labrador

Dr. Pardy is a multi-faith social activist. Through educational, advocacy and consciousness-raising leadership in her province and nationally, Dr. Pardy confronts anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and all religious prejudice, highlights the joyous benefits of all faiths, and works persistently, with patient perseverance, with multiple faith communities 'for the common good' of society. As noted by Haseen Khan, Executive member with the Canadian Interfaith Conversation, "from pew to pulpit, to public officials, to public and social media; from synagogue to Mosque, to Temple, to Gurdwara, Dr. Pardy has spent years in education,

consciousness-raising, advocacy and solidarity, highlighting for society the benefits of the pluralistic nature of our country and the necessity for appreciation and understanding of all religions, noting that the many paths to the Divine command respect from all.”

Dr. Pardy has provided leadership for all manner of religious literacy events, particularly in understanding Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, including availing of the specific resources within these various faith communities and on-site visitations.

Since 2004, her passion and outstanding leadership has been through the Religious Social Action Coalition, of Newfoundland and Labrador as a Director and as Chair (since 2020), working for the 'common good' in society, within the Coalition, and with enthusiasm, eagerly attending significant religious ceremonies and celebrations of each faith community represented and, through social media and other avenues, educating the public re the same.

Imam Abdul Hai Patel, Canadian Council of Imams

Imam Abdul Hai Patel has worked to strengthen interfaith understanding volunteering for over 40 years with the Canadian Council of Imams, as the Interfaith Ambassador amongst other duties, serving as President with the Canadian Multifaith Federation, serving as a Commissioner with the Ontario Human Rights Commission 1999-2005, consulting with Corrections Canada and serving as a Director with Scouts Canada 2005 – 2008 and assisting in the redevelopment of the Spiritual Badge relevant to all faiths. He has served with the Campus Chaplains Association at the University of Toronto since 1996, as a member of the writing team to the publication, *That We May Know Each Other: United Church–Muslim Relations Today* (2006) and a member of Inter-Faith Social Assistance Reform Coalition – a group of over 25 faiths, lobbying for social justice and poverty reduction in the Province of Ontario. He also contributed as a member of planning Committee for the G8/G20 religious Leader’s Summit in Winnipeg in 2010 having provided leadership in prior international conferences in Cologne, Germany in 2007 and Osaka, Japan, 2008 respectively. Over the course of his career Imam Patel has been exceedingly generous in offering his time as a representative of the Muslim community to partner with others for the common good both locally, nationally and internationally.

Angie Peters, Yonge Street Mission

At Yonge Street Mission, Angie Peters mobilized the social sector, funders, businesses and faith groups in a collaborative effort toward ending long term poverty. She engages the voices of lived experience leaders to guide outcomes and their measurable impact. Beginning in 2022 this process has birthed 3 focused working groups who are advancing solutions for deeply affordable housing, income support and access to social services. In 2024, Angie published *Just Act*, a book that inspires individuals, faith communities and businesses to take action toward ending long term poverty. The toolkit helps readers develop an action plan to mobilize this work. Angie’s leadership models the powerful impact faith communities can make for the common good in civil society.

Harold Rosen, Multi-Faith Summit Council of British Columbia

Over 40 years, Harold Rosen promoted interfaith and multicultural cooperation by co-founding both the North Shore Multicultural Society and Abbotsford Interfaith Movement and by chairing both the Multifaith Action Society and the Canadian Chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom. He has designed and taught 225 courses on spiritual traditions and cultures, contributed to 3 curricula addressing diversity and justice issues, while publishing 3 books and several articles on comparative religions, world views and civilizations. He has given many public talks for interfaith conferences and forums. For the past four years, he has served as the Education Chair of Multi-Faith Summit Council of BC, where he has recently been coordinating and editing the Council's initiative entitled *Sharing Light: A Multifaith Resource Manual for BC Educators*.

Rabbi Shalom Schachter, Toronto Board of Rabbis

Rabbi Shalom Schachter seeks “to find ways to contribute to the social well-being of society” while endeavouring “to bring my religious sensibilities to that work.” As such, he initiated multi-faith clergy advocating for better care standards for the infirm, and better employment conditions for precarious workers, including presentations to legislative committees. Rabbi Schachter was instrumental in shaping Canada’s parental leave program. Following a terrorist attack against a Quebec mosque, Rabbi Schachter reached out to Ontario mosques to help establish Rings of Peace around their facilities, and spoke at some of these mosques. He has provided rabbinic leadership to numerous groups including the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, the Toronto Area Interfaith Council, the Christian Jewish Dialogue, Habitat for Humanity, as well as pastoral support in multi-faith environments.

Bishop Nigel Shaw, Anglican Military Ordinariate

Bishop Nigel Shaw served 31 years as a Chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces and was instrumental in its transformation from a divided Christian chaplaincy to a unified multifaith chaplaincy. As Director of Chaplain Services he revised policies to accommodate the participation all faiths. He served on the Inter Faith Committee Canadian Military Chaplaincy since 2010, Vice Chair 2019 to 2024, and revised enrollment standards for chaplains to remove barriers for non-Christian faith traditions and revised the Committee Handbook to reflect the current diverse membership. He sponsored and mentored the first Universalist Unitarian chaplain for the Canadian Armed Forces. Elected Anglican Bishop Ordinary (2016), serving as the Anglican Inter Faith Committee Canadian Military Chaplaincy representative. Appointed to Anglican -Roman Catholic Bishop’s Dialogue (longest extant in the world) in 2016 and served as Co-Chair since 2017.

May Shihadeh, Victoria Multifaith Society

May Shihadeh is a passionate community leader, advocate, and intercultural bridge-builder with decades of social work service advancing inclusion, justice, and interfaith understanding. Holding a Master’s degree in Intercultural and International Communication, she tirelessly builds bridges between communities through interfaith dialogue, research, collaborative projects, local, national to international advocacy.

As Executive Member of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation and Chairperson of the Victoria Multifaith Society —representing the Muslim seat—May leads efforts to foster mutual respect

among Christians, Jews, Muslims, Baha'is, Hindus, Sikhs, and others. She organizes listening circles between Abrahamic faiths focused on addressing the Middle East conflict and advancing peacebuilding. Additionally, she facilitates Islamophobia and antisemitism training for local organizations, including law enforcement.

She represented Canada at the UN International Congress in Europe, presenting on intergenerational trauma. May supports newcomers through private sponsorship, leading interfaith teams to welcome and resettle refugee families in Canada. She also empowers newcomer youth to overcome challenges and thrive in Canadian society.

As a Board Member of the Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee, she contributes to culturally sensitive education and training for law enforcement. A community leader in politics, May serves as Vice Chair of the National Women's Liberal Commission, representing Saanich–Gulf Islands and advocating for women and marginalized communities.

She has received multiple awards in recognition of her effective and outstanding community work and leadership.

Dr. Harjot Kaur Singh, Calgary Interfaith Council

Dr. Harjot Kaur Singh is a dynamic and knowledgeable speaker and lecturer to Interfaith groups and a distinguished representative of the Calgary Sikh community. Among her leadership roles in the Sikh community, Dr. Singh is the Chair of the Sikh Advisory Committee of the University of Calgary Faith and Spirituality Centre, the Board of Director of the Guru Amar Das Niwas Seniors Nursing Home Association, the past Chair of the International Khalsa Council, and was the Inaugural Lil Faider Scholar – in -Residence for the Beth Tzedec Synagogue. She serves on the Board of Directors of Sikhnet and was a trustee on the Siri Singh Sahib Corporation. She has also been an integral part of Calgary Women in Spirituality and currently serves as the Chair of the Calgary Interfaith Council. In these roles she has provided outstanding leadership in fostering inter-religious co-operation.

Dr. Kala Singh, Multi-Faith Summit Council of BC

Dr. Kala Singh is passionate about creating world peace through interfaith dialogue and fostering religious literacy. He has been a tireless volunteer as a founding member and current Chair with the Multi-Faith Summit Council of BC, past member of the City of Vancouver's Advisory Committee on Diversity, and providing leadership with the World Parliament of Religions. He is also deeply engaged in interfaith leadership in his own community as Chair of the Interfaith Committee of Global Sikh Council. He has lectured and published widely on the topic of Sikh religious and spiritual dimensions of mental health. He firmly believes peace is possible if all faiths join hands. He is physician, motivational speaker, author, YouTuber, and a TV and Radio personality.

Michelle Singh, Faith & the Common Good, Spiritual Dialogue Circle

The Reverend Michelle Singh's commitment to the interfaith movement centers on facilitating meaningful conversations that allow people to listen deeply, share authentically and recognize

our shared humanity. In 2008, she co-founded a multi-faith Spiritual Dialogue Circle which continues to meet monthly. Michelle has been actively engaged in Canada's interfaith movement, including co-chairing the steering committee of 2015's award winning World Interfaith Harmony Week. In 2018, she was a Board member and Steering Committee Co-Chair for the Parliament of the World's Religions in Toronto. She currently sits on the boards of Encounter World Religions in Guelph and Greening Sacred Spaces in Ottawa. As Executive Director of Faith & the Common Good, Michelle works with religious and spiritual communities to take action to create more sustainable communities.

Imam Michael Taylor, Correctional Service Canada, Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy

Imam Michael Taylor has contributed significantly to interfaith understanding and religious diversity in his professional and volunteer life for over 30 years. Starting as a volunteer in the Toronto Jail in 1992, he has successfully worked across faith traditions and communities in his professional life in Mental health and Addictions (CAMH 1995 – 2010), Ontario Multifaith Council (2010 -13) and Correctional Service Canada (2013 – present). His voluntary work includes Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2011), the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy (2018-Present) and the board of Resolve Counseling Canada. His role in interfaith circles is widely respected and acknowledged. Michael is renowned for his qualities of openness, seeking understanding, cooperation and creating opportunities for change in his work with Canada's faith communities.

Kim Uyede-Kai, The United Church of Canada

Kim Uyede-Kai's personal background has grounded her professional interfaith work in Canada. Her Buddhist/Shinto maternal ancestors left Japan in 1900 and settled on K'omoks land (Cumberland), BC. Her paternal ancestors settled in Victoria, BC and became Christian, a colonial religion. Her Japanese Canadian family and community lived through racist WW2 internment, dispossession, and displacement which led her to walk in solidarity with Indigenous justice, truth, reconciliation, and her work supporting Indigenous United Churches nationally and regionally (Ontario). She served as staff support for the formation of the National Indigenous (Aboriginal) Unit of The United Church of Canada honouring traditional Indigenous spirituality and Christianity, within a framework of racial justice and decolonization. Kim has been a tireless advocate in supporting individuals and communities finding their voice at the intersection of racialized and religious identities. Kim has written numerous articles and resources advancing racial justice from a faith perspective and continues to do the personal and professional work of interfaith decolonization.

The Rev'd. Tuula Van Gasssbeek, National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee, World Interfaith Harmony Week, Toronto

As a Lutheran minister with Diploma in Interfaith Dialogue (University of Toronto), Tuula Van Gasssbeek has dedicated her career to fostering interfaith understanding. As the Christian Co-Chair of National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee she promotes interreligious dialogue as an important dimension of a culture of peace. With interfaith partnerships, she has organized programs in diverse communities within Toronto Community Housing, including youth cooking classes and farm-to-table projects to alleviate food insecurity. She is a founding

member of World Interfaith Harmony Week, Greater Toronto Area, now in its 13th year with an official status in the city of Toronto by mayoral proclamation. It has grown to include participation of dozens of faith groups. Additionally, she has led multiple successful refugee sponsorships, helping families resettle in Canada, offering them new opportunities and safety. Aware of the distinct challenges in our unique landscape she passionately believes that uniting Canadians of diverse faiths & backgrounds is key to healing divisions that plague our world.

Aileen Van Ginkel, Christian Higher Education Canada, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Aileen Van Ginkel has been an active leader of multifaith dialogue while serving in a variety of executive roles with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) (1989-2020) and Christian Higher Education Canada (2020-2024).

Rooted in her Protestant Christian tradition, she has facilitated dialogue and decision-making among groups representing Protestant, Evangelical and Roman Catholic traditions, notably as a co-facilitator (2008-2020) of the Roman Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue, hosted by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the EFC.

Aileen represented the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada soon after the Canadian Interfaith Conversation (CIC) was formed in 2009. In her capacity as a CIC participant and co-chair from 2016-2020, she emphasized the importance of “deep dialogue,” which values opportunities for people to talk about the things that have deepest meaning for them. She believes that efforts to work together for the well-being of all people in Canada are best done in the context of respect and shared understanding of the deeper values and beliefs that people carry within them, rather than from expectations around people simply getting along with each other.

During her tenure as Chair, Aileen sought to make the Canadian Interfaith Conversation a place that welcomed deep dialogue at all of its gatherings, including the national “Our Whole Society” conferences that she helped to organize. Hosted by the CIC, “Our Whole Society” continues to demonstrate the ways that faith communities can contribute to the common good of all people and to the flourishing of Canadian society as a whole.

John Voorpostel, Greater Toronto Area World Interfaith Harmony Week

John Voorpostel brought inspiration, dedication and his excellent organizing skills in animating World Interfaith Harmony Week in the Greater Toronto Area beginning in 2012 and led the steering group to an internationally recognized Bronze Medallion by the King of Jordan in 2015. He also created an annual Interfaith Champion Award in 2019 and organized a 2022 video demonstrating how the Toronto committee creates and promotes the Week. The video has been shared by the Parliament of World Religions and on the United Nation World Interfaith Harmony Week home page.

John brought to the task of organizing and promoting World Interfaith Harmony Week his strengths as a CPA and relationships built being a member, director and eventual chair of an ethnically diverse business advisory committee to the (then) Federal Business Development Bank.

Connie Waterman, Surrey Interfaith Council

Connie Waterman was a founding member of Surrey Interfaith Council, a board member of the Multifaith Action Society, who served in various positions such as secretary, vice president and president, and is a founding member of the Comox Valley Multifaith Group. Together with the members of the Surrey Interfaith Council executive, she established and coordinated the first annual celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week in Surrey which included an interfaith pilgrimage which continues to this day. She also coordinated quarterly interfaith Roundtable Discussions where social issues could be discussed frankly – with kindness and courtesy, in a safe space and mutual supports could be established. At the Multifaith Action Society, she is part of a dedicated team that not only creates spaces for interfaith dialogue, they produce the award-winning Multifaith Calendar, a unique educational tool which serves to bring awareness of the celebrations and commemorations of 26 different Faiths.

The Rev'd. David Wells, The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

David Wells has voluntarily served as chair of the Multifaith Committees which organized chaplaincies for six Olympic Games, two Paralympics, six Commonwealth Games, two Pan Am Games and one Parapan Ams. The Rev'd. Wells continues to serve nationally and globally with several interdenominational and multifaith organizations providing ongoing consultancy for spiritual and religious care related to athletes at major sporting events. As the General Superintendent of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada he is respected as a leader who interacts and serves people of multiple faiths and backgrounds with equal dignity and care. He provides a consistent voice opposed to racism and faith-based animosity.

Andrew Wesley, Indigenous Elder

Andrew is Mushkegouk/Omushkego Cree from James' Bay and survivor of the Indian Residential School system. An ordained Anglican priest he worked to establish Toronto Urban Native Ministry, an ecumenical ministry with the Anglican and United Churches with wide ranging impact across the Greater Toronto Area. He has been a recognized Elder at University of Toronto for many years and currently serves on the University's Council of Aboriginal Initiatives Elders' Circle. His critical leadership in Healing Circles with other survivors has also included significant cross-cultural education and bridge building work in Truth and Reconciliation programming with non-Indigenous communities increasing understanding, respect and religious literacy, including in interfaith settings, about Indigenous Spirituality. In addition he co-chaired the Anglican Church of Canada's national Commission on the Doctrine of Discovery, Truth, Reconciliation and Justice. In 2015 he was recognized as Elder of the Year by the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation for helping preserve Indigenous spirituality, language, stories, history, way of life.

Additional Recipients

Amira Elghawaby, Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia was nominated by her Member of Parliament.

Belle Jarniewski, Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, past Board member of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation was nominated by the Province of Manitoba.

Akaash Maharaj, Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption, current Board member of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation was nominated by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.