

## **Myoshin Kate McCandless**

**BIO:** Myoshin Kate McCandless is an ordained Soto Zen priest and co-guiding teacher of Mountain Rain Zen Community in Vancouver. She began Zen practice forty years ago in Japan, and has been ordained and teaching for the last twenty years. She has worked over many years as an organic farmer, ESL teacher, translator, and clinical counsellor in women's health and hospice/bereavement care. Gardening, hiking, choral singing, poetry and social/environmental engagement are all elements of her spiritual life and practice.



## **Dr. Nasir Zaidi**

**BIO:** Dr. Zaidi is a Spiritual Care Practitioner at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) a Muslim Chaplain at UBC, Spiritual Consultant at Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre, and a sessional lecturer at the Vancouver School of Theology. Dr. Zaidi believes that Islam, in its true spirit, has strong universal messages for all religious and spiritual communities. He aims to promote the true picture of Islam by highlighting its moral, ethical and spiritual aspects by connecting students to the spiritual wellbeing of the UBC community. He hopes to make evident the effectiveness of Islam's ethical and spiritual principles, and the promotion of interfaith harmony. It is also important for him to demonstrate the capability of Islamic spirituality in enriching other faiths and religious traditions.

Dr. Zaidi holds a PhD and Masters in Islamic Philosophy and Theology from the University of Tehran in Iran, as well as a Masters in Arabic from the University of Punjab in Pakistan. All of these achievements are evaluated and approved by ICES, Canada. Prior to his current role, Dr. Zaidi acted as the former Director General (Research) of the Counsel of Islamic Ideology at Islamabad Pakistan from 2007 to 2010. He was also a Visiting Professor at University of Bonn in Germany from 2006 to 2007, and an Assistant Professor at the International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan from 2003 to 2005.



## **Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan Kaplan**

**BIO:** Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan-Kaplan is the Director of Inter-religious Studies & Professor of Jewish Studies at the Vancouver School of Theology. She holds a B.A. in Philosophy from Brandeis University, Ph.D. in Philosophy and Education from Claremont Graduate University, Rabbinic Ordination from ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, and Graduate Diploma in Spiritual Direction from the Vancouver School of Theology.

She is Rabbi Emerita of Or Shalom Synagogue in Vancouver and Professor Emerita of Philosophy at UNC Charlotte.

Rabbi Laura received many teaching awards, including the American Academy of Religion's Katie Geneva Cannon Award for Excellence in Teaching, American Association of Philosophy Teachers Award, Carnegie Foundation's U.S. Professor of the Year, UNC Board of Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence, and Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence.

Rabbi Laura is author or editor of ten books. Recently, she authored *Mouth of the Donkey: Re-imagining Biblical Animals* (Cascade, 2021) and *The Infinity Inside: Jewish Spiritual Practice Through a Multi-Faith Lens* (Albion-Andalus, 2019). Recent co-edited projects include *Encountering the Other: Christian and Multi-faith Perspectives* (Wipf & Stock, 2020) with Dr. Harry Maier and *Spirit of Reconciliation: A Multi-faith Resource* (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2020) with Dr. Ray Aldred.

Locally, Rabbi Laura is a popular lecturer, retreat leader, and synagogue prayer leader. She loves to bring people together for dialogue and discussion. Each year at VST, she hosts an Inter-Religious conference on a theme of public concern. Recently, she was honoured with a Visioneers Lifetime Achievement Award for Peace and Community Well-Being.

Rabbi Laura, a dual Canadian-American citizen, grew up in New York City. She is married to psychologist Charles Kaplan. Together they are musical partners in the band Sulam, parents of two young adults, and caretakers of a changing array of companion animals.



## **Dr. Ron Dart**

**BIO:** Dr. Ronald Samuel Dart, BA (Lethbridge), DCS, MCS (Regent College), MA (UBC), is a university professor and author. In 2022, he was hooded as Doctor of Ministry and Humanities (honoris causa) by St. Stephen's University (New Brunswick).

Dr. Dart recently retired from the Department of Political Science, Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

He has authored forty books that deal with the interface between literature, spirituality and politics, including Thomas Merton and the Beats of the North Cascades. He is one of the primary experts on the life and thought of both Stephen Leacock and George Grant and their place in the pantheon of traditional Canadian conservative thought.

He is a board member of the Thomas Merton Society of Canada and serves as the Canadian contact for the Evelyn Underhill Association and the Bede Griffiths Sangha. He has also penned numerous articles on Mountaineering.



## **Arun Chatterjee**



**BIO:** Arun Chatterjee comes from a Hindu background and is informed by many faith traditions since childhood in India. He arrived in Canada 26 years ago. In 2007 an awakening experience brought him from engineering to interfaith Spiritual Care. Arun went to Vancouver School of Theology and Vancouver General Hospital for his education earning an MAPPL. He currently works as a CPE Supervisor-Educator with a Health Authority in the Lower Mainland area. Arun lives in South Surrey with his wife, three children and mother.