

MEC Chaplaincy Training Program 2026

Virtual | Interactive | In-Service



A National Standard-Bearer for Islamic Chaplaincy

Pastoral Challenges at the Crossroads of Faith, Justice & Responsibility

Email info@mec-usa.org | Text 646 369-6791

<https://muslimendorsementcouncil.org/>

April 26, 2026 | Dhu'l Qadah 1447



A National Standard-Bearer for Islamic Chaplaincy

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

April 26th, 2026 | Dhu'l Qadah 1447 | 10:00 AM ET to 6:30 PM EST

Pastoral Challenges at the Crossroads of Faith, Justice & Responsibility

Moderator: Chaplain Rafael Lantigua

Program

Opening Session: 10:00AM to 10:15AM	
Qur'an Recitation (Surah Al-Balad).....	Chaplain Raymond Elias
Opening Dua' Welcome Program Overview Guidelines	Chaplain Rafael Lantigua
10:15AM – 11:15AM Keynote Address:	
The Guiding Light: Cultivating <i>Hikma</i> (Wisdom) in Pastoral Decision-Making.....	Dr Zainab Alwani
11:20AM – 12:20AM	Session 1: Anchoring Care in Revelation.....Chaplain Sondos Kholaki
12:20AM – 12:30PM	Break
12:30PM – 1:20PM	Session 2: A Muslim Chaplain's Role in Government Institutions: Navigating Around Religious Freedom.....Chaplain Mustafa Boz
1:20PM – 2:10PM	Lunch Salah
2:10PM – 3:00PM	Session 3: Beyond Pastoral Care: Advocacy, Legal Rights, and the Pursuit of Justice
3:00PM – 3:10PM	Break
3:10PM – 5:30PM	Session 4: Spirituality and Religion in Advance Care Planning: Islamic Perspectives
5:30PM – 6:20PM	Closing Plenary: Rooted Chaplaincy: Combining Emotional and Moral Intelligence
6:20PM – 6:30PM	Thank you Closing Dua'



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Guidelines

For MEC Endorsed Chaplains & For Those Requesting a Certificate of Participation:

Cameras must be on and in a stationary location throughout the entire program (all sessions).

No driving or multi-tasking, please and thank you!

Your participation is appreciated and valuable to this training.

The Training will be recorded for MEC's records.

To improve our future trainings kindly fill out the evaluation form that was emailed. At the end of the training day please return to info@mec-usa.org

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MEC VISION

To maintain, reinforce and improve quality standards of spiritual care for people in public and private institutions.

MEC MISSION

To provide a structure and process for the official endorsement and support of Muslim chaplains based on Islamic and pastoral principles and to establish a national standard for such endorsement, in order to develop consistency and integrity in the field of Islamic chaplaincy. MEC serves to manifest the Qur'anic enjoinder and Prophetic traditions of consultation and consensus as also practiced by the four rightly guided caliphs. It strives to represent the diversity within the Muslim community in the United States.

DEFINITIONS

Islamic chaplaincy: is the field of spiritual care and counseling utilizing pastoral care guidelines and methodologies from an Islamic paradigm.

Muslim chaplain: A Muslim chaplain is a person who serves in public and private settings such as the community, corrections, education, healthcare, and the military from the Qur'anic and Prophetic paradigm and catering to the unique institutional context, to facilitate the provision of Islamic worship and other services such as:

- Providing spiritual and religious guidance and education
- Facilitating individual and communal prayer
- Coordinating religious rites
- Developing effective working relationships with Muslims and people of other faiths
- Responding to emotional and spiritual crises of Muslims and people of other faiths
- Catering to the religious needs of Muslim congregations
- Assisting in shaping religiously inclusive institutional policies
- Protecting the religious rights of Muslims and people of other faiths

Endorsement: Endorsement is an official declaration by MEC that a man or woman meets the Council's standards for serving in a specialized setting of Islamic chaplaincy. In general, endorsement is a process whereby a faith tradition certifies that a person has the requisite attitudes, competencies, formal learning, skills and faith community's support needed to facilitate the delivery of services to members of that faith tradition and people of other faiths in public and private institutions.



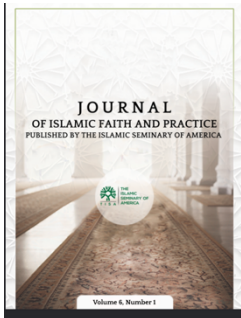
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Read MEC's Annual Report 2025: <https://muslimendorsementcouncil.org/mec-annual-report-2025/>

Endorsement is a statement of support that vouches for a chaplain's skills, achievements and character.

Apply for MEC Endorsement: <https://muslimendorsementcouncil.org/endorsement/#1598736168909-c21dfcf6-60aa>



Read the Articles Written by Our Presenters in the *Journal of Faith and Practice* Vol 6.

<https://journals.indianapolis.iu.edu/index.php/JIFP/issue/view/1804/677>

MEC Scholar
Muslim Endorsement Council

A PARTNERSHIP IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The TISA - MEC Scholarship Program provides **full tuition scholarships** to eligible Muslim students.

For more Info please contact Chaplain Shazeeda Khan at info@mec-usa.org

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Share with those who can benefit.



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MEC's FIVE CORE COMPETENCIES FOR ENDORSEMENT

I. Qur'anic Literacy

Candidates must demonstrate a working knowledge of the Qur'an. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Reading the Qur'an in Arabic with Tajweed
- B. Qur'an Memorization
- C. Familiarity with scholarly interpretations of Qur'an
- D. Ability to apply the Qur'an to everyday situations in the US and in the context of chaplaincy engagement

II. Prophetic Theory and Praxis

Candidates must demonstrate familiarity with the entire biography of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), and the applicability of his life example. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Ability to recall and discuss major events in the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)
- B. Basic knowledge of hadith and their impact on the Muslim practice of Islam
- C. Ability to apply the Prophetic example to current everyday situations in the United States
- D. Sound knowledge of the basic Fiqh of Islamic worship including the five pillars of Islamic practice i.e. Shahadah, Salat, Sawm, Zakat, Hajj

III. Cross Cultural Capability

Candidates must demonstrate the necessary interpersonal skills for working effectively with Muslims and people of other faiths from various cultural backgrounds, as well as with both males and females. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Basic working knowledge of the major cultural groups that the chaplain is likely to encounter in his or her chosen field of chaplaincy
- B. Effective conflict resolution skills
- C. Self-awareness and insight when it comes to dealing with one's own biases

IV. Facilitation Skills

Candidates should be able to demonstrate the consistent ability to counsel and "connect" with people in a sensitive, open, and respectful way. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Providing effective support that contributes to the well-being of persons who request their help
- B. Providing support to and/or referrals for persons experiencing loss and grief
- C. Developing, coordinating and facilitating public worship/spiritual practices as appropriate

V. Professional Theory and Practice

Candidates should be able to promote and integrate chaplaincy as a professional discipline into the life of the institution where they function. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Establishing and maintaining professional and interdisciplinary relationships inside and outside of institutions in which they function
- B. Articulating an understanding of institutional culture and systems, especially when it comes to ethical decision-making
- C. Demonstrating an ability to effectively document interactions within the institutions where they work

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Zainab Alwani is the Founding Director of the Islamic Studies program at Howard University School of Divinity (HUSD). She is the Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and the chair of the Religious Studies Master of Arts program at HUSD. She is an Islamic scholar, researcher and community activist. Dr. Alwani is also the first female jurist to serve on the board of the Fiqh Council of North America and currently serves as the Council's Vice-Chair. She is a member and a board member of various national organizations including Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights KARAMAH and the American Academy of Religion. Dr. Alwani is currently serving as the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice. Her research focuses on Quranic studies, Islamic jurisprudence, the relationship between civil and religious law in the area of family, women and gender, and inter-religious relations.

Currently, Dr. Alwani is working on a groundbreaking project regarding orphan care, the Orphan Care Project. The goal is to provide knowledge and scholarship from an Islamic perspective as well as alert the community to this pressing issue. As the Program Director of the Fiqh Forum on Orphan Care, she is calling for orphan care to become a priority of the Muslim community.

Prior to joining the School of Divinity, Dr. Alwani was the Program Director and Adjunct Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Northern Virginia Community College. She was also an Adjunct Professor of Arabic Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. She developed courses in Arabic Studies that focused on the link between Islamic philosophy, language and culture. She also taught Islamic history, inter-religious dialogue and comparative religion at Wesley Theological Seminary and the Washington National Cathedral.

She has authored and co-authored a wide variety of publications ranging from textbooks and book chapters to scholarly articles. She co-edited a special issue of The Muslim World journal published by Hartford Seminary, Judaism and Islam in America, (October 2014 Volume 104, Issue 4). Some of her latest publications include: "Maqāṣid Qur'āniyya: A Methodology on Evaluating Modern Challenges and Fiqh al-Aqalliyāt (p 465–487)," The Quranic Model for Harmony in family relations, Critical Reading in *al-Ghazālī's Usul al Fiqh*/Legal theory Books, "Muslim Women as Religious Scholars: A Historical Survey," in *Muslima Theology: "New Voices of Muslim Women Theologians,"* "What Islam Says about Domestic Violence" and "Religion, Gender, And Family Law: Critical Perspectives On Integration for Western-Muslims" in "Applying sharia in the West," Leiden University Press. Dr. Alwani received her PhD in Islamic Sciences (Usul Al-Fiqh) and Islamic Jurisprudence from the International Islamic University in Malaysia. Her PhD dissertation examined *Maqāṣid/objectives of al Sahriah* in the area of family, the book "*The Family and Maqasid Al Shariah: Marriage and Divorce in American Muslim Family.*"

Moderator

Chaplain Rafael Lantigua is currently a student at the Air Command & Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama. As a Major in the Air Force Chaplain Corps, he provides unit ministry, pastoral care, counseling, and advice to leadership. He leads Muslim worship services and provides weddings, funerals, memorials, and other rites commensurate with his religious endorsement. He is endorsed by the Islamic Society of North America. Chaplain Lantigua enlisted in the United States Air Force in November 1994 and completed three deployments in Kuwait (1998-1999), Afghanistan (2002), and Iraq (2003). He commissioned as a 2LT with the US Army in November 2008. Upon receiving a Master of Arts in Islamic Studies & Christian-Muslim Relations and a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary, he was appointed as a chaplain in June 2013, accessioning into the Air Force Chaplain Corps in March 2014. Since, he has completed three deployments in Cuba (2017, 2019) and the Levant (2024-2025). He has served 30 years on Active Duty and 1 year in the National Guard.

(Continues on next page)

Qur'an Reciter and Presenter

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Chaplain Raymond Elias is a board-certified chaplain (BCC) with the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) and endorsed as a healthcare chaplain through the Muslim Endorsement Council (MEC). He has 5 units of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education): 1 unit from St. Camillus Center for Spiritual Care at LA General Medical Center in Los Angeles, CA and 4 units from John Muir Health in the San Francisco Bay Area, CA. Raymond has an M.Div. in Interfaith Chaplaincy from Claremont School of Theology (CST) and a certificate in Islamic Studies and Leadership from Bayan Claremont Islamic Graduate School. Raymond has served as a chaplain at various hospitals, including the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore, MD, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, TX, and John Muir Health where he currently works. Raymond became Muslim over 15 years ago.

Presenters

Chaplain Samsiah Abdul-Majid is a Malaysian-born Muslim chaplain who has lived in the United States since 1993. She currently serves as a part-time palliative care chaplain at Westchester Medical Center (WMC) in Valhalla, New York. Chaplaincy is her second calling - after a 35-year career with the United Nations in Bangkok and New York, she returned to graduate school, complementing her MBA with a Master's in Islamic Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary (2014). She completed her first CPE unit at WMC and her residency at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. She is board-certified through APC-BCCI and endorsed by ISNA.

In addition to hospital chaplaincy, Samsiah serves as principal of a weekend Islamic school in Westchester, New York, supporting more than 200 students from Pre-K through high school. She is also engaged in chaplaincy research, with publications in collaboration with Professor Lance Laird and colleagues, contributing to the growing field of Muslim healthcare chaplaincy. She is a proud grandmother and grateful mother, carrying the love of her husband of 48 years in her heart. Alhamdulillah.

Chaplain Sakinah Alhabshi is a Muslim interfaith chaplain, relational educator, and former corporate executive based in Pennsylvania with roots in Malaysia. She is a doctoral candidate at Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Professional Education and Religious Leadership. She currently serves as a hospital chaplain at St. Luke's Health and as Director and Lead Faculty for Respect Islamic Graduate School's Family Continuing Studies Program, where her current projects include premarital education courses for the community (@respect_gs).

Chaplain Sakinah holds a Master's in Islamic Studies and Inter-religious Chaplaincy from the Graduate Theological Union and completed two years of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Stanford Hospital. Her Islamic formation includes an Advanced Diploma in Islamic Studies from Arees University, and traditional Islamic studies in Yemen, Indonesia, and Malaysia. She also holds an Executive MBA from GE Oil & Gas University (Italy) and a Bachelor's in Environmental Engineering from Northwestern University. Chaplain Sakinah serves on the Board of Directors of Rabata and Yayasan Jariah-Aafiyat Foundation. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the Respect Mosque and the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programs at Stanford Hospital and St. Luke's Health. She lives in Pennsylvania with her Turkish husband, stepsons, 50 chickens, cats; and loves hanging out with horses at a nearby farm.

Chaplain Mustafa Boz has been serving in Federal Prison as a Muslim Chaplain since 2012. Previously he served five years as a Muslim Chaplain in Connecticut Department of Corrections. He is a graduate of Hartford Seminary's Islamic Chaplaincy Program and holds endorsement from the Muslim Endorsement Council. He is a graduate of the Turkish Imam Hatip system, holds a BA in Islamic Studies from Ankara Divinity School and had nearly completed a MA in Tafsir before immigrating to the U.S. He has previously served as Vice President of Corrections Chaplains with the Association of Muslim Chaplains and currently lives with his wife and two young children in Southeast Michigan.

Chaplain Sondos Kholaki is a board-certified chaplain with the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) who has served in hospital, police, and community settings across Southern California. She earned her Master of Divinity in Islamic Chaplaincy from Bayan Islamic Graduate School, where she received the Fathi Osman Academic Excellence Award. She also completed a two-year

program in traditional Islamic studies under Shaykh Dr. Walead Mosaad through Dar Al-Rayyan Seminary and holds certification in end-of-life and palliative care from an Islamic and spiritual care perspective. Sondos is the author of the award-winning book, *Musings of a Muslim Chaplain* (2020); a co-editor of and contributor to the anthology, *Mantle of Mercy: Islamic Chaplaincy in North America* (2022); and an award-winning writer on topics related to grief, loss, and chaplaincy for various media platforms. Sondos previously served as Vice President of Healthcare for the Association of Muslim Chaplains. She is currently a visiting faculty member and trustee at Bayan.

Chaplain Ibrahim Long, MSW, MA, GCIC, is a Muslim chaplain, registered social worker, and educator whose work centers on spiritually integrated care, mental health, and community advocacy. Clinically trained in spiritual care and counselling, he brings over a decade of chaplaincy experience supporting individuals and families across educational, healthcare, and community-based settings. His approach integrates Islamic spiritual frameworks with trauma-informed, strengths-based, and evidence-informed practices. Ibrahim's work has appeared in the *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice*, and edited volumes including *Mantle of Mercy: Islamic Chaplaincy in North America*. He currently serves as Youth Wellness Manager and Chaplain at Islamic Family and is a Sessional Instructor in Social Work and Child and Youth Care at NorQuest College.

Thank you!

For attending the MEC Virtual Interactive

In-house Training 2026

Your participation was most appreciated!

We pray it was beneficial!