

Volunteer Handbook

A Guide for Circle of Atonement Volunteers

Updated: February 2024



CIRCLE OF ATONEMENT



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Welcome!

We are so grateful that you feel called to give the gift of your time to extend the message of *A Course in Miracles*. As a small nonprofit, we rely on the help of a diverse team of volunteers who each contribute their own unique skills and expertise to help us serve thousands of students around the world. And there is a lot of work to do!

We greatly value *all* of our volunteers and the energy and enthusiasm you bring to the team. As you will see, we strive to maintain a high standard of quality in our programs and services, and we are committed to supporting your journey too.

In this handbook you will find an outline of the Circle's [Purpose](#), [Values](#) and [Strategic Initiatives](#), as well as an overview of the various projects we are currently working on. You will learn what you can expect from us, and what is expected from you while you are volunteering with us. We know that your time is valuable and we want the hours you spend with the Circle of Atonement to be as fulfilling as possible.

Thank you again for your commitment to helping us extend the message of the Course and serve fellow students on this remarkable path. We look forward to getting to know you!

Avonie & Sarah

Volunteer Coordination Team

volunteer@circleofa.org

Updated February 2024. This document supersedes all previous versions.



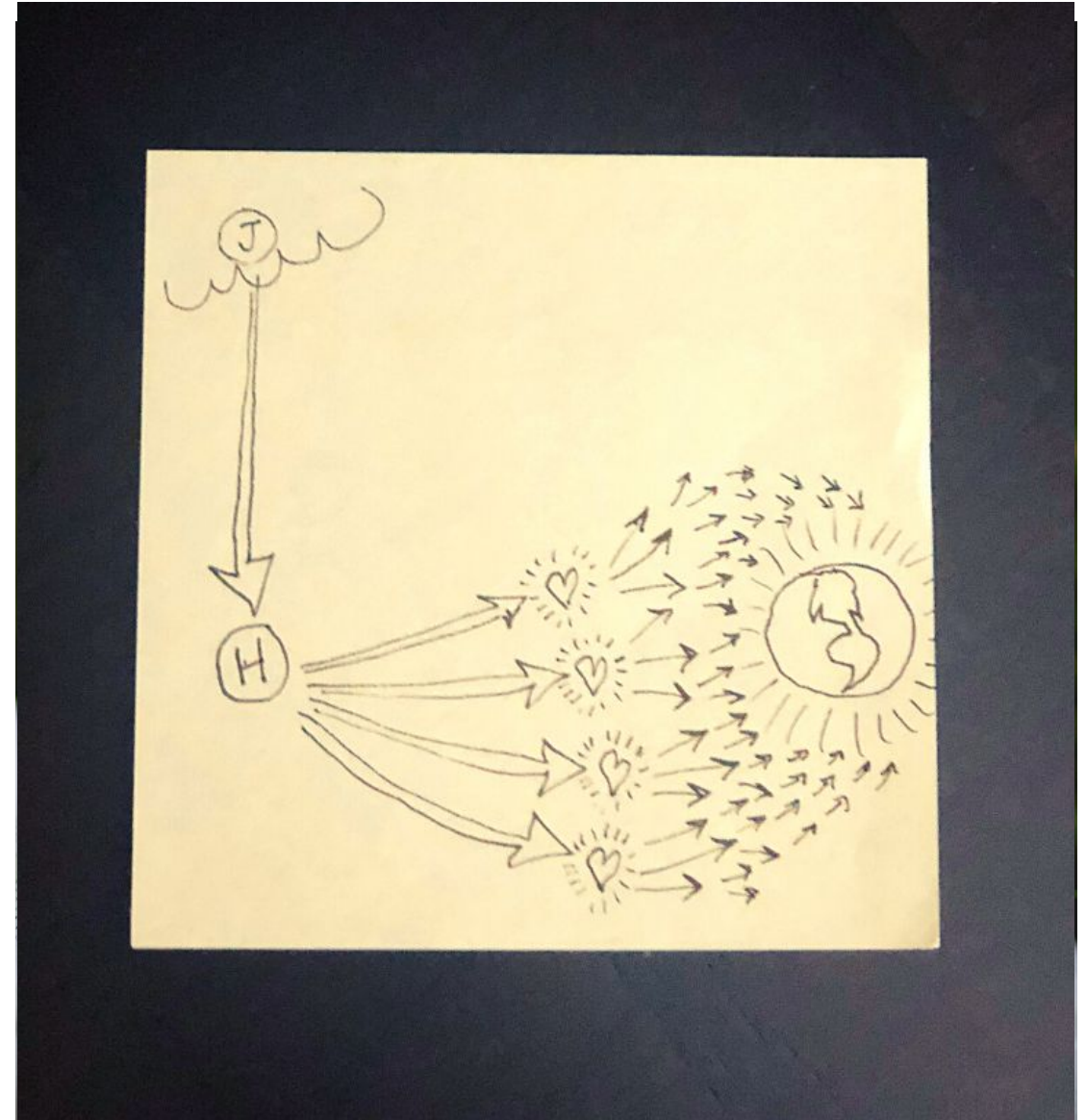


Our Purpose & Values

Our Purpose

We believe *A Course in Miracles* came to give the world an incomparable gift.

We are here to extend that gift as faithfully as possible, to help it reach “from the paper on which it was written into the hearts for which it was intended,” so those hearts can, in turn, light the world.



Robert Perry drawing of the Course's journey from Jesus to Helen to the hearts that will light up the world.



Our Values

Faithful interpretation of *A Course in Miracles*

We consider our foundation to be the faithful interpretation of *A Course in Miracles*. We are committed to the Course itself as the authority and we seek to represent its meaning to the best of our ability. We attempt to adhere to the words on the page without bias or personal preference as we seek an ever-deepening understanding of Jesus' teachings.

Service to a Higher Calling

We serve a sacred calling, which provides the basis for the way we conduct operations. The business dimension of our organization is secondary to this higher calling and is considered purely a means to its accomplishment.

Sincere Care for the Spiritual Development of Those We Serve

We facilitate the spiritual growth of students in their study, practice, and extension of *A Course in Miracles*. As a student-focused organization, we treat their progress as our own and act out of love and genuine care for those who come to us for help on their journey with the Course.

Guided Decision-Making

We are a guidance-based organization. We are committed to seeking and following God's will in all aspects of operations, and we make this process central to our planning and decision-making. Recognizing that we are imperfect channels, we exercise careful discernment of the guidance we receive.

Application of Course Principles

We aspire to live the teachings of *A Course in Miracles*. We are serious about our personal study, practice, and extension of this path. We endeavour to demonstrate Course principles in all our actions and relationships. We strive to view every interaction as a holy encounter, an opportunity to show love, respect, and forgiveness.

Responsible and Wise Stewardship

We are committed to being loving and accountable guardians of all aspects of Circle operations. We strive to maintain a high standard of excellence in our programs and services. It is our intention to be wise and responsible stewards, and to always act with integrity and honesty.





Strategic Initiatives

2020 – 2025



Strategic Initiatives

In 2020, the Circle of Atonement completed a visioning project that identified five strategic initiatives we consider our highest organizational priorities.

As a volunteer, your work with us will be essential to supporting these priorities and we feel it is important to share them with you.



1. Strengthening our organizational base.

Our goal is to build a solid internal structure that will allow for the Circle's growth. Projects we're working on in these areas include: (1) Deepening relationships with our donor community through more financial transparency, developing a monthly giving program, and frequent communication on how gifts are being used. (2) Nurturing teachers, group leaders, additional volunteers, and committee members who are willing to come together to be the arms and legs of this work in the world.

2. Growing our community of students.

Our goal is to grow Course Companions into a community of thousands. Projects we're working on in this area include: (1) Improving our social media presence. (2) Beginning online advertising campaigns. (3) Sharing the Course on popular podcasts, blogs, and other media outlets. (4) Creating an app that would be as functional and beautiful as our Course Companions membership site.

3. Addressing personal and societal issues.

Our goal is to be a place where students can turn for support and guidance through difficult times, both individually and collectively. Projects we are committed to in this area include: (1) Issuing statements from Circle leadership in response to major news events. (2) Hosting workshops on Course-based approaches to life challenges. (3) Thoughtfully exploring these issues through our podcast, newsletter, and magazine articles.

4. Building a global network of study groups.

Our goal is to offer resources for study groups that will simplify the process from the beginning to end. Projects in this area include: (1) Hosting online training as a first step to starting an ongoing study group leader program. (2) Building a website hub for study groups that offers all the resources needed to begin and maintain a group, as well as a directory where students and teachers can find each other.



5. Preparing for a physical home.

Our goal is to have an education and retreat centre that would be a place to study Course teachings, experience the practice, and carry its gifts home to others. We hope to have a capital campaign for this project in place in the near future.

As you can see, there is so much to do and we hope that you feel as inspired as we do about everything that is planned, because you will play an important part in how we get there.





Operational Guidelines (Our Covenant)

Our Shared Covenant

Our operational guidelines form a *Shared Covenant* which is entered into by all Board members, Staff, and Volunteers of the Circle of Atonement. By volunteering with us, you are agreeing to adhere to these guidelines to the best of your ability.

- We will adhere to the Circle's Purpose & Values, recognizing that this is essential and that deviations pose an existential threat to the Circle.
- We will bring heightened sensitivity to all thoughts and actions - both taken collectively and individually - in the decision-making process. We commit to fully disclose where personal and Circle interests may intersect, and especially where personal interests may interfere or conflict with the latter. In these cases, Circle interests must prevail.

- We affirm the importance of dissenting opinion. We not only welcome it but also actively encourage and seek it in the belief that it can often improve the quality of decisions.
- We understand that, as representatives of the Circle, we may be viewed as examples of people sincerely walking the path of *A Course in Miracles* in all aspects. Therefore, we will endeavour to infuse every action with honesty and integrity. We acknowledge that this requires us to be truthful, honest, and transparent, and to hold a strong sense of accountability.

Should you require further guidance on any of these points, if you are in any doubt about potential conflicts, or if you have any concerns, please discuss this with your Team Leader, or feel free to contact one of the Volunteer Coordination Team leaders.





Volunteering With Us

*I stand within the circle, calling you
to peace. Teach peace with me, and
stand with me on holy ground.*

ACIM-CE T-14.VII.8:5-6

Your part in the Circle of Atonement.

All new Volunteer applications are processed by the Volunteer Coordination (VC) Team and your first personal interaction with the Circle of Atonement may have been with them. You are welcome to contact the VC Team at any time, but once you are assigned to a specific team or project, you will be matched up with a Team Leader who will be your primary point of contact.

The following overview should help you see where your project or team fits into the organization as a whole.



CIRCLE OF ATONEMENT

Board of Directors

Mark de Bruijn Bob Simpson Karla Middlebrooks Michael Bouchard

Team Members

Robert Perry - Founder

Emily Bennington Perry - Executive Director

Mary Anne Buchowski - Teacher

Sarah Knight - Administrative Director

Cindy Lantier - Customer Care Manager

Jacqueline Ramsey - Logistics Manager

Avonie Brown-Reaves - Community Manager

James Gregory - Exec. Teaching Assistant

Avonie Brown-Reaves & Sarah Knight - Volunteer Coordinators

CIRCLEOFA.ORG



The Volunteer Teams

Volunteer Coordination Team

Responsible for the Circle's volunteer attraction and intake, maintaining an up-to-date database of volunteer skills and availability and assisting Team Leaders with any volunteer requirements.

The Volunteer Coordination Team also take care of regular communication, arranging quarterly meetings and celebrating the successes of our volunteers.

Team Leaders: Avonie Brown-Reaves
& Sarah Knight
volunteer@circleofa.org

ACIM Story Project

The Circle of Atonement [Story Project](#) shares stories of inner transformation, spiritual guidance, healing, holy encounters, and even experiences of our true nature and God.

The power of such stories is that they ignite in us the sense that the teachings of *A Course in Miracles* are really true and genuinely work to bring us closer to who we really are - God's holy children.

Team Leader: Sue Pearson
sue@circleofa.org

Digital Media Team

Volunteers in the Digital Media Team cover various projects such as:

- Closed captioning of YouTube videos
- Production of support materials for the ACIM CE App
- Proofreading the content of digital booklets and materials

Team Leader: Avonie Brown-Reaves
avonie@circleofa.org



The Volunteer Teams (Continued)

Archiving Project

This project started with uploading and reformatting articles from the Circle's old website to the new website.

While that part is essentially complete, the project was expanded to include Zoom Archiving of Circle videos, and keying of old articles with references to the CE version, both of which are ongoing.

Team Leader: Jacqueline Ramsey
jacquie@circleofa.org

Prayer Ministry

The Prayer Ministry is made up of a group of 30 volunteers across 9 different time zones who have been trained to pray for others as outlined in *A Course in Miracles*. The team pray for all the requests which are submitted [via our website](#).

Team Leader: Shadia Sachedina
pray@circleofa.org

Spanish Article Translation

Translation of key articles and resources into Spanish as part of a larger project to make Circle of Atonement materials accessible to the Spanish-speaking community.

Team Leaders: Miguel Carrera Troyano & Carolina Alonso

Community Champions

A dedicated team of volunteers who help to provide a welcoming presence and assist fellow community members in navigating our online platform and resources. As well as providing assistance, Community Champions help to maintain our unwavering commitment to a 100% kindness policy and play a pivotal role in fostering discussions related to *A Course in Miracles* and Circle of Atonement programming.

Team Leaders: Avonie Brown-Reaves & Sarah Knight
volunteer@circleofa.org



Volunteer Opportunities

As and when new volunteer projects and opportunities become available, you will find them listed on the Circle's website at www.circleofa.org/volunteer. If you see something that you are interested in, please feel free to get in touch with Avonie or Sarah by email - volunteer@circleofa.org

If you know someone else who may be interested who is not currently on our database, please ask them to complete the [online application form](#) and someone will be in touch with them within 48 hours.

Response to a 2020 volunteer survey clearly showed that people tend to volunteer with the Circle of Atonement because they have benefited from our teaching and would like to give something back. This is wonderful to hear.

A dedicated group space in our online community gives volunteers the opportunity to keep in touch regularly. Active volunteers (those who have submitted hours during the month) are invited to attend monthly [Friends of the Circle](#) meetings where they are kept up to date with organizational plans and progress.





Timesheets & Contact

Timesheets

Why we have a volunteer timesheet

We ask that your volunteer time be recorded for a number of reasons, including:

- It helps us to support financial transparency - whether the work is paid or unpaid it is accounted for.
- It helps identify projects that may need to be overseen by a staff member due to the volume of work involved.
- Reports to the Board and donors include the information to show how our programs are supported by the volunteer community.

How to complete the timesheet

- Once you click on the link a form will open.
- Select your name from the drop down menu
- Select your project from the drop down menu
- Enter the date
- Select the number of hours from the drop down menu (If you don't know the exact amount, a 'best guess' will be sufficient.)
- If you need any help, please email volunteer@circleofa.org



Staying in Touch



Regular Communication

Our volunteers are from various continents and so it is not practical to get together in person, however we are committed to maintaining regular contact and providing opportunities to stay connected. You can expect:

- Regular team/project updates from your Team Leader.
 - A regular Volunteer Team update in our online platform
 - Inclusion in Circle communications such as the Annual Report and Circle News.
- This is an opportunity to celebrate our successes and share project progress with one another and the wider Circle of Atonement community.

Problem Solving

We are committed to making your experience here a positive one. If you have any concerns or problems in your volunteer role, your initial point of contact should be your Team Leader. If you feel unable to discuss the issue with him or her for any reason, or you have already done so and don't feel satisfied with the response, please feel free to contact the Volunteer Coordination Team at volunteer@circleofa.org and we will be glad to assist.





Volunteer Exit Process

When You Leave

While many of our volunteers have been with us for a number of years, we recognize that for others, volunteering may be a short-term commitment. Please let us know if you plan to stop volunteering, especially if it is before your project is complete. This will help us find a suitable replacement and, if necessary, to arrange a handover.

However long you volunteer with us, we sincerely appreciate your service and would love to hear your feedback about the things you enjoyed, and also whether there is anything we can do to improve the experience for current and future volunteers. To this end, we will be in touch with you at the end of your time as a volunteer and will ask you to complete a short survey or to have a chat with a member of our volunteer team.



We are so happy to have you with us and hope this handbook has clearly set out what you can expect as a Circle volunteer. We have tried to answer the most common questions, however if there is something we missed, please email us at volunteer@circleofa.org. Welcome aboard!

