

Handbook for Groups and Branches of the Anthroposophical Society in America

Welcome Friends!

At long last we have an updated and refreshed *Handbook for Groups and Branches* of the Anthroposophical Society in America. We have worked to tighten the contributions and make it more user-friendly as an online and easily-referenced document. Its purpose remains the same as before: We wish to provide information and inspiration for all those involved in fostering community life on behalf of the Anthroposophical Society in the U.S. Working with and sculpting this handbook has been a labor of love!

This remains a working document - with the intention of evolving as the Society itself evolves. Many of the useful articles contained in the previous version of this handbook have been pulled out of the original 250 page document. They are now accessible through the links in the reference section at the end of this document. Valuable information can be found in those articles and they are worth referring to as you continue to develop your group or branch. Any one of the articles would serve as a good source for a study session for branch leaders.

Thank you to the many people who have worked to bring together the thoughts and materials in this handbook. It represents countless hours of thoughtful working and intention on the part of volunteers interested in sharing their experiences and hopes for growing our Anthroposophical Society. Many striving human beings sharing the same ideals can come together in community to foster the life of Anthroposophy - may this handbook be a tool used to build this community!

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Introduction to the Anthroposophical Society in America

The Anthroposophical Society in America (ASA) supports and furthers the work of Rudolf Steiner in the United States. We are an open membership organization that fosters self-development and inspired social engagement. Anthroposophy is a discipline of research as well as a path of knowledge, service, personal growth, and social engagement. Introduced and developed by Rudolf Steiner, it is concerned with all aspects of human life and spirit, and with humanity's future evolution and well-being.

General Council

The General Council of the Anthroposophical Society in America carries the spiritual mission of the Society, and they are the volunteer board of directors of our non-profit organization, with responsibility for its legal and financial well-being.

School for Spiritual Science

The General Council strives to represent the Anthroposophical Society in the world, support the work of the School for Spiritual Science and the Sections, and help cultivate a deep relationship to anthroposophy among members and initiatives. It is the intent and purpose of the General Council to serve as a connection to the incarnation of anthroposophy in our time.

Regional Councils

The ASA created Eastern, Central, and Western Regions to help build activities in our large country. Representatives from each region, as well as members-at-large, serve on the General Council. Wherever you live, you can contact the regional council representatives to connect with members in your area and find out about regional initiatives. See the contact information on our website: <https://anthroposophy.org/get-involved/>

Leadership Team, Headquarters and Staff

In addition to the General Council, the ASA has paid staff. The three-member Leadership Team are professional staff who work together with the General Secretary to take initiative, lead, and serve on behalf of the Society. The Leadership Team consists of our Director of Development, Director of Programs and Director of Operations. We also have a Director of Communications who administers our website and journals (both print and online).

While members of the Leadership Team live in different parts of the country, the ASA has headquarters in Ann Arbor, Michigan. To contact us at our national office:

The Anthroposophical Society in America

1923 Geddes Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1797

TEL (734) 662-9355 Email: information@anthroposophy.org

Website:

www.anthroposophy.org

The General Anthroposophical Society

~ Our connection to international anthroposophy

The ASA is directly connected to the General Anthroposophical Society headquartered in Dornach, Switzerland. At the 1923 Christmas meeting, Rudolf Steiner established the form of the present General Anthroposophical Society. The Executive Council holds the central responsibility for the Anthroposophical Society worldwide and is an initiative group, which establishes programs and gives direction to anthroposophical work across the globe.

Within, and at the center of the General Anthroposophical Society stands the School for Spiritual Science organized into Sections. If the task of the General Society is the "cultivation" of spiritual science, the task of the School for Spiritual Science is the spiritual scientific research itself. The Sections are:

- General Anthroposophical Section (the Executive Council at the Goetheanum)
- Section for Mathematics and Astronomy
- Medical Section
- Natural Science Section
- Agriculture Section
- Pedagogical Section
- Art Section
- Youth Section
- Section for the Arts of Eurythmy, Speech, Drama, and Music
- Section for the Literary Arts and Humanities
- Section for Social Sciences

<https://www.goetheanum.org/en/anthroposophical-society/the-society/>

Introduction to Groups and Branches & Process for Recognition

There are no requirements that groups working out of anthroposophy become officially connected with the Anthroposophical Society or with a local group or branch of the Society. When a group of people decide to seek recognition within the Society it is a declaration of commitment to link their activities with the Society and to build on the life force that flows from the Society.

Any **group** with seven or more members of the Anthroposophical Society in America may request recognition by the national Society. (see the following steps toward recognition below) Types of recognized groups may include study groups, performing groups, or subject and interest groups.

A **branch** is an entity larger than a group which takes on the overall responsibility for receiving the efforts of its members and for fostering anthroposophy where there are a number of diverse forms of activity in a community. Branches often publish newsletters or calendars, coordinate activities, and plan general programs of interest to everyone. Sometimes, there may be two or more recognized groups, or a number of informal study groups, or a study group and a number of initiatives (Waldorf school, biodynamic farm, foundation-year course, etc.) working in the same area. In general, an area needs about 50 Society members to carry a branch, though it is possible with fewer. A branch may or may not have its own building. Some will hold their activities in a school or private home, others find a suitable public location they can use. The character of the branch is often more public than that of a group, but everything depends on the locale and the people. A directory of local contacts is available on the website to help people connect directly with fellows in their area. A list of the more than 120 existing groups and branches can be found here: <https://anthroposophy.org/get-involved/local-groups-regions/>

Requesting formal recognition usually occurs when a group finds itself ready and able to shoulder responsibility for the life of the Anthroposophical Society in their area and wishes to link their efforts with those of the national and international societies.

Steps for requesting recognition

1. Contact your regional council representative

[Eastern Region](#)

[Central Region](#)

[Western Region](#)

2. Write and submit a formal letter, with a minimum of 7 member signatures, requesting formal recognition.

3. Schedule a conversation with the Regional Council Representative or the entire Regional Council if possible.

4. The Regional Council will share with and endorse your request for recognition to the General Council for their final determination.

5. Confirmation regarding the status of your group will come from the Regional Council.

The following documents are available for new groups and branches on our website with helpful information.

Links to Articles for Group and Branch Building

[PROCESS FOR FORMING A RECOGNIZED GROUP OR BRANCH](#)

By Joan Treadaway and Beth Wieting

[TAX-EXEMPT STATUS FILING REQUIREMENTS: Acquiring 501c\(3\) Status](#)

By James W. Emerson

[SHOULD A BRANCH HAVE A NAME?](#)

By Dr. Virginia Sease

[STARTING GROUP WORK – POSSIBLE PROJECTS](#)

By Linda Connell

[BEING AND BECOMING TOGETHER: ANTHROPOSOPHICAL GROUP WORK TODAY](#)

By Russell Evans

BRANCH PROGRAM IDEAS

by MariJo Rogers

FESTIVALS OLD AND NEW

By Ben and Estelle Emmett

FESTIVALS AS A PATH OF INITIATION

By Hazel Archer Ginsberg

EVENT PLANNING: CHECKLIST FOR EVENT PLANNING

by Linda Connell

CONFLICT IN GROUPS

by Bill Camp

SUGGESTED STUDY TOPICS FOR NEW GROUPS AND BRANCHES

By Marianne L. Fieber

BUILDING REGENERATIVE COMMUNITIES CONVERSATION AND RESOURCE GUIDE

Edited by Marianne L. Fieber and Mary Christenson

The School for Spiritual Science

At the heart of the General Anthroposophical Society is an institution that was intended to be an esoteric school, a university, based on spiritual-scientific knowledge and research. While the task of the General Anthroposophical Society is to cultivate public awareness of spiritual science, the task of the School is to further the actual research of spiritual science.

Rudolf Steiner announced the School for Spiritual Science when the General Anthroposophical Society was re-founded during the Christmas Conference of 1923. He began establishing the School directly after the conference. He planned to organize it into three Classes and various Sections. The school is also referred to as The Michael School.

During the course of 1924, Rudolf Steiner held a new series of esoteric lessons in which he introduced a set of meditations (mantras) with instructions and guidelines on their use. Anthroposophists, who had been accepted by Steiner as members of the First Class in his new School, were allowed to attend these special esoteric sessions. Today the Class material comprises a complete course of 19 fundamental lessons given between February 15 and August 2, 1924 in Dornach, several lessons given in other locations and seven “recapitulation lessons” given in September 1924. Rudolf Steiner’s illness and death prevented him from establishing the

Second and Third Classes.

After Rudolf Steiner's death, members of the Executive Council and later also Class Holders designated by them, began conveying this esoteric course material to members of the First Class, using the shorthand notes as a basis. Today there are many groups of Class Holders around the world who meet to discuss questions concerning the work within the First Class and propose new Class Holders to the leadership of the General Anthroposophical Section.

The School for Spiritual Science is organized into departments, or Sections that conduct spiritually-based research into specific areas of life. Each Section organizes its own study and work. Representatives of the Sections work together as a Collegium. More information regarding the Sections may be found at: <https://www.rudolfsteiner.org/school>

The School for Spiritual Science in North America serves members of the Anthroposophical Society in both the United States and Canada. After two years, members of the Anthroposophical Society may apply for membership in the First Class of the School for Spiritual Science. Unlike the step of membership in the Anthroposophical Society, joining the First Class reflects an inner commitment to a meditative life and to the wish to represent anthroposophy in the world.

Detailed information about membership can be found in the booklet *A Way of Serving: The General Anthroposophical Section of the School for Spiritual Science* by Penelope Baring and Ruediger Janisch (Mercury Press, 2013). This book may be ordered through www.mercurypress.org

Initiatives and Programs of the ASA

The fruits of Anthroposophy exist abundantly in the world! The ASA has several important initiatives in which members of the Society can benefit and participate:

Anthroposophy.org is the website for the ASA, providing important information for members on the work of the Society.

Rudolfsteiner.org is our sister site gathering together extensive information on the core ideas and organized initiatives that inspire and manifest this movement for human cultural and social renewal, along with groups carrying them.

being human Our magazine *being human* addresses “personal and cultural renewal in the 21st century” through initiatives, arts & ideas, research & reviews, and news of the Society. We report on initiatives in each issue of our publication *being human*, which is available in print and digitally. Past issues of *being human* are available online: <https://issuu.com/anthrousa> The Anthroposopher: podcast <https://anthroposophy.org/podcast/>

Youth Section The Youth Section’s vision is to create a world that values, supports and allows the potential and creativity of every young person to unfold their full strength and brilliance. See more at www.Youthsection.org

Traveling Speakers Program The Traveling Speakers program (TSP) was launched in 2006 by the Membership Enrichment Committee of the General Council. It serves communities who want to deepen their work on a particular anthroposophical subject, yet lack the funds to bring in speakers. The honorarium and travel costs for speakers can be offset by TSP. For information contact Hazel Archer Ginsberg Hazel@ReverseRitual.com or Margaret Shipman shipman2005@sbcglobal.net to guide you through the details.

The Council of Anthroposophic Organizations (CAO) The CAO brings together individuals with experience in the management of initiatives and entrepreneurship. It brings complementary perspectives to those of the Society and the School for Spiritual Science. In recent years CAO members have represented on-the-ground activities and a traveling conference Finding Our Voices.

The APO Anthroposophical Prison Outreach (APO) is a non-profit program. It encourages incarcerated individuals to take responsibility for their lives. This is accomplished through the study of anthroposophical teachings, the practice of meditative exercises, meaningful reflection on their own biographies and the development of positive human relationships. The APO is an undertaking unique to the USA and is based at Rudolf Steiner House in Michigan. www.anthroposophyforprisoners.org

Other Resources in the Anthroposophical Movement

In addition to ASA programs, many other initiatives arising out of anthroposophy are independently organized and administered. Some links and resources for further study:

RS Library:

<https://www.rudolfsteiner.org/rsl/>

RS Archives: <https://www.rsarchive.org>

Steiner Books: <https://steinerbooks.org>

Mercury Press: <http://www.mercurypress.org>

AWSNA: <https://www.waldorfeducation.org/awsna>

Biodynamic Association (BDA):

<https://www.biodynamics.com>

Christian Community: <https://www.thechristiancommunity.org>

Camphill Association of North America:

www.camphill.org

Anthroposophic Medicine/PAAM: <https://paam.wildapricot.org>

Lilipoh magazine: <https://lilipoh.com>

Renewal, Journal for Waldorf Education:

<https://www.waldorflibrary.org/journals/21-renewal-a-journal-for-waldorf-education-7309>