

# Hineni House Handbook



“What is saving my life now is becoming more fully human, trusting that there is no way to God apart from real life in the real world” Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World*

# Table of Contents

## [INTRODUCTION](#)

## [THE PITCH](#)

## [MISSION, GOALS & HISTORY](#)

[Hineni \(hee-NEY-nee\)](#)

[Mission](#)

[Goals of the program](#)

[History](#)

[St. Margaret Cedar Cottage](#)

## [FAQ \(Frequently Asked Questions\)](#)

[Do I have to be a Christian or Anglican to be part of this community?](#)

[Do I have to be involved in St. Margaret's in some way?](#)

[Do I have to take care of finding a job or are placements available for me?](#)

[What does it cost?](#)

[How long is the program?](#)

[When can I apply?](#)

[How is admission decided and when will I find out if I have been accepted?](#)

[What is the minimum size of the Hineni community?](#)

[How much time is involved?](#)

[Who is in charge?](#)

[What do you mean by "rule of life?"](#)

[What happens when there's a conflict?](#)

[Does the Handbook determine exactly what happens in our year?](#)

## [THE BOARD](#)

[Who is on the board?](#)

[What does the board do?](#)

## [RULE OF LIFE](#)

[The Discipline or Practice of Community](#)

[The Discipline or Practice of Simplicity](#)

[The Discipline or Practice of Prayer](#)

[The Discipline or Practice of Submission](#)

[The Discipline or Practice of Study](#)

[The Discipline or Practice of Service](#)

## [A WEEK IN THE LIFE](#)

## [DISCERNMENT](#)

## [RESOURCES](#)

[Director Position Description](#)

[Hineni Application \(2015-2016\)](#)

[Hineni Lifestyle Agreement](#)

[Media Release](#)

[Applicant Reference](#)

[Hineni Bible Study](#)

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook holds all the information surrounding the Hineni program. It has been ordered for the curious enquirer so that you can read it in sequence as it anticipates what you want to know next. We don't want to assume too much. A knowledgeable reader can quickly scan the table of contents and access what they are interested in. The goal is that no matter the question, the answer starts off with, "*Have you checked the handbook?*"

But a handbook is just a handbook: it does not determine exactly how the program looks in some regimented way. Rather it gives a framework, so that the program can be crafted around the unique people and needs of *this* particular community in *this* year. We want it to truly be your program, not just ours. In fact we will incorporate feedback from the year into the Handbook going forward. You will be an important part of how God shapes Hineni in the years ahead.

## THE PITCH

You are a young person, post high school or University/College, and not really sure what to do with the rest of your life. You are either working or going to school or both. You are interested in developing a sense of direction as you anticipate the future. Why not consider 9 months at Hineni? At Hineni you could live in an intentional community with 4 other people asking similar questions, while integrated with the vibrant faith community of St. Margaret's Cedar Cottage in Vancouver, British Columbia.

At Hineni, you will explore and grow in your understanding of who you are in God's world and what you might do in that world as you:

- interact formally and informally with your housemates to facilitate community.
- learn together and be challenged together in community.
- use spiritual direction and counselling resources.
- relate with community mentors.
- serve St. Margaret's together in manageable ways.
- deepen your prayer and worship life, and engage in spiritual practices.
- have fun!

That's the Hineni dream. We want you to learn and enjoy things that you can incorporate into your life in a sustainable way and carry with you for the rest of your life. Interested? Read on.

## MISSION, GOALS & HISTORY

It's important to know where we are headed and where we came from. That's what this section is about. But first of all: what's with this name Hineni?!

### **Hineni (hee-NEY-nee)**

Hineni is a Hebrew word which means here I am or I am here, it is what Moses says when God calls to him from the burning bush, and the word means more than just a physical presence, it reflects a person's readiness to do God's work, to take up whatever task it is that God is calling them to do. We believe this name is perfect for our program which will help young people who choose to live in community explore what it is that God is calling them to be and do in the world.

You'll enjoy doing the Hineni Bible Study in the Resources section!

### **Mission**

"To provide a communal living space for young adults to serve, both in the parish and the broader community, while coming to a deeper personal, spiritual and vocational understanding."

### **Goals of the program**

1. To provide young adults an opportunity to live in intentional Christian community for 9 months.
  - gain an appreciation for living simply
  - strengthen interpersonal skills through group living
  - experience the joys and challenges of committing to living within a rule of life with their co-participants
  - deepen faith through life in community
2. To provide young adults an opportunity to serve the wider community and to learn about different forms of ministry/service in the world.
  - to serve within the context of the parish of St. Margaret's and/or the wider church community
  - to deepen faith through service in the community
3. To go through a process of discernment in terms of their own vocational and spiritual calling.
  - to engage in spiritual direction as a way to reflect on God in their life and how they see themselves being led by God
  - to participate in theological reflection with the group and individually as a way to clarify one's own beliefs and values and to respect the beliefs and values of others
  - to be challenged in one's faith life and to learn to grow

## History

In 2013 Saint Margaret's parish (see below) had the idea of using the rectory (a rectory typically is where the church minister/priest lived) to provide young adults with intentional community living, spiritual and vocational discernment, and a commitment of service to the broader community. This idea captured our imaginations and resonated with our ministry goals. We were excited to find a use for the property that would allow us to harness the many gifts of both our parish and our Diocese and offer an important ministry to a group of people for whom not many programs have traditionally been available.

We have talked to other groups that are currently doing similar programs, especially the long established Episcopal Service Corps in the United States ([www.episcopalservicecorps.org](http://www.episcopalservicecorps.org)) and the newly forming Ascend community in Edmonton ([www.ascendleadershipproject.com](http://www.ascendleadershipproject.com)), and began to dream about how we might be able to make our vision a reality.

In the summer of 2015 we undertook a serious renovation that included re-wiring, re-plumbing, re-painting, re-pretty-much-everything the entire inside of the house: refinishing the hardwood floors; replacing old carpet; installing a new kitchen; renovating two bathrooms; cleaning up the yard and garden and fixing the garage. This will be a really sweet place to live!

## St. Margaret Cedar Cottage

St. Margaret Cedar Cottage ([www.stmargaretscedarcottage.ca](http://www.stmargaretscedarcottage.ca)) is a small, vibrant, and diverse worshipping Anglican community in East Vancouver that actively lives out our mission statement of *Sharing God's Welcome; Food for the Hungry, Life for the Weary*.

At our heart we believe we are called to offer the generous hospitality and welcome that we see lived out in the ministry of Jesus. This commitment to welcome has meant that we are a growing community where many different kinds of people find a home. We are diverse in age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, abilities and health status. A large proportion of our parishioners are in helping professions (paid and volunteer) and many others in our parish are on the receiving end of these services, but at St. Margaret's we all come together to worship, pray, sing, serve, and be reminded that we are each beloved children of God, called to participate in God's work in the world together.

Don't you just want to ask: What's with the 'cedar cottage' bit?!

## FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

### **Do I have to be a Christian or Anglican to be part of this community?**

We can see how you might get that idea with all that talk of church! The short answer is “no”. St. Margaret’s welcomes all, no matter what they claim to believe or not believe. The slightly longer answer is “No, but you need to be able to fully support the goals of the program and St. Margaret’s and be able to fully participate in the life of the community.” More details can be found in the Resources section below (see the Lifestyle Agreement).

### **Do I have to be involved in St. Margaret’s in some way?**

Yes. They are more than a landlord! Involvement in a reasonable way both individually and as a Hineni group, will be an important part of your experience and growth during the year. Besides, they’re a fun group to be a part of. But then again we’re biased ;-)

### **Do I have to take care of finding a job or are placements available for me?**

Yes, you find your own job, or if going to school, you take care of that as well! Unless you want us to randomly enroll you in some program :-) Unlike other programs which provide placements, Hineni, wants to incorporate what you have already going on in your life. We hope that you can integrate the learning & habits developed at Hineni into the rest of your life.

### **What does it cost?**

\$700/month covers your rent, internet and cable, all programming, spiritual direction, counseling, and 2 retreats a year. Such a deal in Vancouver!

### **How long is the program?**

For the first year it will be 9 months - November 1 to July 31. This leaves a month free - August - for transition between Hineni cohort groups.

### **When can I apply?**

As soon as you are interested. With just 5 spots, you never know! The application form is in the Resources section. The application window runs from February 1 through May 15. In 2015, our inaugural year, we are accepting applications up until September 15th.

### **How is admission decided and when will I find out if I have been accepted?**

The selection committee is made up of the Director and some members of the Board (see later) They will let you know, one way or the other, by May 15. In 2015, our inaugural year, we will let you know by October 1st.

### **What is the minimum size of the Hineni community?**

Three wonderful people like you! The house holds a maximum of 5 people who each will have their own bedroom.

### **How much time is involved?**

It sounds like it could involve a lot of extra commitment. Will it be manageable if I have a full time job or go to school full time? Two answers. The first answer is yes. This is not meant to be a super intense marathon. Otherwise that defeats our stated goal: We want you to learn & enjoy things that you can incorporate into your life in a sustainable way and carry with you for the rest of your life. The second answer is “it depends!” It depends on whether you can actually abide by the Lifestyle Agreement you sign (see Resources section below) For example if you are enrolled as a full time student you might decide that to really benefit from all that Hineni has to offer you need to drop a course (or two!).

### **Who is in charge?**

We know the right answer is God! In more pragmatic terms, there is a director who works with a Board who reports to the Church Committee of St. Margaret's. The director is the person who manages the intake and exit of participants, facilitates the connection with mentors, spiritual directors, leads the 2 retreats during the year, coordinates conflict resolution, and generally has a handle on the heartbeat of the community to make sure it's not just surviving but thriving.

### **What do you mean by “rule of life?”**

Good question. There's a section devoted to just that topic. The program is not a guise to turn you into a monk or nun in a religious order! Rather it is there to open you up to sustainable patterns of behaviour that contribute to a joyful, meaningful life.

### **What happens when there's a conflict?**

Gosh you're being real! It's natural and healthy to have some level of 'conflict' or just disagreement. It's how we handle it that's important. In a nutshell we suggest the following: first follow the instruction of Jesus to talk directly to the person (see Matthew 18:15ff) and see if you

can talk it over and resolve it. Oh but we love to triangulate these things! Beware of doing that; if that doesn't work then try and raise it in one of your community meetings; in all this be in dialogue with the director. That's one of the things they are there for.

### **Does the Handbook determine exactly what happens in our year?**

Yes and no! Yes, in the sense that it gives the framework for what happens. No, in the sense that this framework will be crafted by the director and your group to arrive at a form/shape that has its own unique signature. It has to work for the people God sends us.

## **THE BOARD**

The board exists to ensure the health, success and sustainability of Hineni.

### **Who is on the board?**

The board is made up of a small number of people that do more than just meet together once in a while! They are engaged in the life of Hineni as their time and giftings allow. Currently the Board is not a freestanding society, but reports to the Church Committee of St. Margaret Cedar Cottage.

### **What does the board do?**

Their roles include:

- regular prayer in support of the Hineni project.
- being a supportive, consultative and reference body for the Director.
- all aspects related to personnel engaged in the operation of Hineni. That currently consists of the part time Director. In general terms the Board functions in a governance capacity and the Director in an operational capacity.
- assisting the Director connect participants with Mentors. The goal is that community Mentors will regularly offer workshops for the participants giving participants the opportunity to interact with a variety of mentors.
- serving as an avenue of appeal for participants.
- ensuring that the vision of Hineni is clear and enough resources (personnel and financial) are allocated and that they are efficiently used so as to implement the vision.
- maintaining a clear channel of communication with St. Margaret's. This is achieved by having the priest/minister at St. Margaret's on the board.
- marketing the program in their normal spheres of influence. e.g. talking about it to groups and alerting possible participants to this opportunity.

- being an advocate for Hineni with the diocese and leveraging all channels of effective communication that are available. e.g. submitting articles in local publications of the diocese.

## **RULE OF LIFE**

You didn't sign up to become a monk or nun! We know that. Although there's nothing wrong with being a monk or nun! However for thousands of years communities have adopted a way of being together. That is what we mean by rule of life. In Hineni, together with your director, your cohort will establish a workable rule of life, that is sustainable and life enhancing. We will talk about this using the old language of Spiritual Disciplines or Practices. A discipline is simply something you choose to do to put you in a position where God can interact with you and grow you. We actually are more familiar with disciplines than we think. For example the discipline or practice of dental flossing, puts us in a place where we can seek good dental health. For some the discipline or practice of yoga puts us in a position where we can focus on our physical and spiritual health. You get the idea.

Here are some of the disciplines or practices that might be involved. Remember, your participant cohort will craft these to fit your lives and your schedules with the goal that your spiritual life and discernment is enriched, and that you take away some disciplines that are sustainable in your post-Hineni life.

### **The Discipline or Practice of Community**

This is our first goal: to live in intentional community. While the word "community" is fashionable, the deep thought is that community is grounded in the very being of God: God is community. Before anything ever was created, there was community. The wisdom traditions all recognize that one of key barriers to growth is that we are so self absorbed - it's all about 'my this' and 'my that', even 'my spiritual growth.' And there's nothing like being in community to make this very clear to us!

We will practice Community in some very concrete ways such as:

- keeping house together: menu planning; shopping; cooking; eating; cleaning etc. Ideally these tasks can be shared so that each participant can serve the others as they take their turn.
- serving together in some way in the life of St Margaret.
- going on two retreats together.
- eating together; participating in our main weekly community meal & gathering time together.

### **The Discipline or Practice of Simplicity**

As with all disciplines, Simplicity is fundamentally about freedom. By definition the limitations of space and time will keep your life simple. Simplicity is an inward reality that has an outward expression. Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline* mentions a number of outward expressions that include:

- Develop a deeper appreciation for creation.
- Obey Jesus' instructions about plain, honest speech. Let your "yes" mean "yes" and your "no" mean "no" (Matthew 5:37).
- Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status.
- Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you.
- Develop a habit of giving things away.
- Refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry. (The book was first published in 1978!)
- Learn to enjoy things without owning them.
- Reject anything that will breed the oppression of others.
- Shun whatever would distract you from your main goal.

These will be used as a framework for you to consider/evaluate, from time to time during the course of your year together, both from a communal and individual point of view.

## **The Discipline or Practice of Prayer**

We hope that you will grow in your practice and understanding of prayer. To pray is to be open to God and to cultivate a posture of listening to God. You will practice this in two main ways:

- Communal prayer. With the director you will figure out how this can work best for you. For example, you might decide to end your weekly community meal by praying together. This can be as simple as saying a prayer together (e.g. the Lord's Prayer) when you end, to praying into the events of your coming week. Experiment with what works.
- Individual prayer. The director is available to help. For example, a simple daily discipline is to use the *Examen* ([www.ignationspirituality.com](http://www.ignationspirituality.com))

## **The Discipline or Practice of Submission**

While we might not like the word submit, there is great freedom here. Think of submission as freedom from always having to get our own way or freedom from always having to do things all on our own. Hineni makes this practice real in these relationships:

- Living in Community. Living in community puts a sharp edge on this idea of submission: it's hard to juggle what's best for the other person and what's best for ourselves!
- Spiritual direction. All participants will be linked with a spiritual director.
- Counselling. All participants can make use of available counselling resources.

- Mentorship. All participants will have the opportunity to choose appropriate mentors. Mentors from the wider community will participate in the life of the Hineni community offering regular workshops.

## The Discipline or Practice of Study

Jesus says in John 8:32 “*You will know the truth and the truth will make you free.*” But without a knowledge of the truth, we will not be free. Things that can be done in this area include:

- choosing to individually read, study and reflect on the assigned Lectionary readings that are followed by St. Margaret’s.
- working through some books together as a group. The director will provide a small set of books for the community to choose from. Think of it as a book club! Some appropriate examples include:
  - *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor
  - *The Gifts of Imperfection* by Brene Brown

## The Discipline or Practice of Service

Service is the primary way to cultivate the freedom of humility in our lives. The main avenue for this practice will be serving in some way the community of St. Margaret. This could take many forms such as:

- regular attendance at the weekly worship services.
- participating in some way in these services. e.g. reading Scripture; greeting; preparing and hosting the after service coffee time.
- participating in some way in some church/neighbourhood program.

There’s a lot more that can be said in this area but we hope you get the idea behind this talk about a ‘rule of life’.

## A WEEK IN THE LIFE

So what would a typical week look like? You’re working or studying in your life. But then there’s your Hineni life. Here’s a fictitious “week in the life” of someone like yourself.

DAY	STUFF GOING ON
Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● no work shift today - phew</li> <li>● simply attended St Margaret’s today. Next week though we have to plan our ‘serving coffee after church’ gig. We should talk about that on community night.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this week I am going to continue doing the “Examen”. I find it is becoming a useful habit/discipline.</li> </ul>
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “working 9 to 5”</li> <li>• I am scheduled to cook dinner tonight for 5 of us, although Sam is working late so we’ll save dins for him.</li> <li>• aim to have dinner ready by 7pm. We’ll see!</li> </ul>
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “working 9 to 5” again</li> <li>• I’ll try and finish my chapter on the commute to work so that I am ready to participate in our community night tomorrow.</li> </ul>
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “working 9 to 5” Wow - three shifts in a row - sweet</li> <li>• community dinner tonight followed by community meeting (we tend to check in with two questions: (1) What is working well that we can be thankful for? (2) What could work better?)</li> <li>• we need to plan our “coffee/snack serving time” for this coming Sunday</li> <li>• our director is leading the short book club study on the chapter we’ve all read. Right?!</li> <li>• by the time this is over it’s close to bed time</li> </ul>
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no shift today.</li> <li>• going for a bike ride and will take a picnic lunch.</li> <li>• will do my chore for the week: cleaning the main bathroom - yeah.</li> <li>• hopefully have my weekly check in with the director. Might just be a phone call this week.</li> </ul>
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “working 9 to 5”</li> <li>• a bunch of us thought we’d treat ourselves and go out together</li> </ul>
Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting with my spiritual director over breakfast</li> <li>• I am part of the shopping team. Hopefully the shopping list is ready so we can get this done early.</li> <li>• “working 5pm to 12pm”</li> <li>• must remember to tell my work that I can’t work those shifts on our first weekend retreat coming up.</li> </ul>

## DISCERNMENT

You’re probably wondering how this piece of the Mission statement - “coming to a personal, spiritual and vocational understanding” - will work out for you in Hineni? If not, just skip this section! While we can’t make any promises that you will have a “kapow!” or “burning bush”

experience like Moses, we can say we have thought intentionally about having a lot of the pieces in that discernment puzzle available for you. Things like:

- your interaction with your housemates around topics of discernment and what you feel God drawing you towards. It's amazing how God uses others in our lives.
- your personal opportunity for reflection and working with a rule of life.
- the opportunity to be on retreat together.
- the relationship with a spiritual director.
- opportunities to engage with community mentors.
- the possibility of personal counselling.
- the chance to learn together.

As we orient ourselves with opportunities and practices like these, and as we pay attention, we will find parts of the discernment puzzle coming together, often in ways that surprise us.

## RESOURCES

This section contains a list of resources and forms related to the smooth functioning of Hineni. Each resource starts on a new page. So if you want to print just one of the resources, you just need to print the relevant pages.