



Hosanna Highland Committee Report

June 15, 2025

Prepared by Mark Knoff

Purpose:

Within ninety days, present a written report that delivers a recommendation for the Highland site in support of Hosanna's mission of connecting people to Jesus.

Committee Members:

Ten disciples were selected representing the leadership team, governance board, Hosanna Main disciples, Hosanna Highland disciples, and 8:12.

- Leadership Team: Mark Biebighauser and Shannon Hecksel
- Governance Board: Lance Jeppson and Kathy Van Tol
- Hosanna Main: Lindsey Sharkey and Mark Knoff
- Hosanna Highland: Lyle Femrite and Joleen Krier
- 8:12: Adler Johnson and Alison Deters

Meeting Dates:

The committee met seven times for ninety minutes each time: The first meeting was held April 28. The next meeting on May 8 was held at Highland. The committee met again on May 15. Pastor Mark and Pastor Darren met with Highland disciples on May 17. The committee then met on May 22, May 29, and June 5. Pastor Mark and the committee met with Highland disciples on June 8. The final time the committee met was June 12.

Process:

1. Prayer was integral to the committee's actions and discussions.
2. The first meeting was used to introduce the committee members and discuss Highland's history and background including the college-age ministry. Additional background information was provided throughout the process as requested by committee members.
3. The committee provided weekly updates to Hosanna disciples in Pastor Mark's Weekly Announcements and Devotional.
4. The committee established that any committee vote needed to be a super majority (seven of ten members) voting in favor of an issue; this would then constitute a committee consensus.
5. Over the course of the meetings, the team developed a list of potential alternatives. Initial alternatives included keeping the building, 8:12 ministry and Highland congregation as is; selling the physical building and determining how to integrate Highland disciples into Main while supporting a college ministry (i.e., 8:12); and breaking Highland from Main to form its own congregation.
6. The committee took the alternatives and consolidated them into three main options:
 - a. **Option 1:** Continue to operate 8:12 and Hosanna Highland as it is being operated today.
 - b. **Option 2:** Sell Highland (3 variants):
 - i. Sell Highland and integrate both 8:12 and Highland disciples into Main.
 - ii. Sell Highland, find location near campus for 8:12 (e.g. AmericInn, other), and integrate disciples into Main.
 - iii. Sell Highland, support and encourage college-age students to attend other college campus Christian ministries (may or may not include financial and/or staff support), and integrate disciples into Main.
 - c. **Option 3:** Keep the Highland building. Treat the congregation as a planted church (mission) and provide them use of the facility with five years of financial support before they are a free-standing church. Lease space for Main or allow Main to use Highland for 8:12 in trade for giving them the building.

7. The committee determined that Option 1 (continue to operate as is) was not viable due to not matching Hosanna's vision and stewardship and was therefore eliminated from the options. A majority of the committee favored Option 3 (Highland as a church plant) through a thorough, in-depth evaluation focused on potential transfer details. An estimated budget was provided by Shannon Hecksel. The concept in c: Option 3 was amended after committee discussion. Key aspects of Option 3 (church planting) as amended include:

- a. Highland secures a minimum \$80,000 per year over a five-year period that does not include the regular Highland disciple giving or proposed mission dollars from Hosanna Main. Potential income sources include \$20,000/year from Synod for church planting for a period of five-years. Campus ministry dollars of up to \$50,000/year (period unknown) could be available from the Minnesota South District. Potential alumni donors could make up the difference.
- b. Hosanna Main provides mission dollars on a declining basis over a five-year period in the amounts of \$80,000, \$65,000, \$50,000, \$40,000 and \$30,000. Some form of Hosanna mission partnership can be evaluated after that period by the Hosanna mission committee. Highland shall submit to Hosanna a quarterly financial report to monitor financial accountability during the first five-year period.
- c. Five-year purchase clause: If the Highland church plant is not viable during the five-year period, the property reverts to Hosanna Main and will be sold with all proceeds going to Hosanna. If the church is self-sustaining after five years, then Highland would purchase the property from Hosanna Main for a price of \$340,000, and Highland retains ownership of the property. Payment terms and length of term at 0% interest will be determined by Hosanna's governance board and Highland leadership.
- d. Highland disciples must agree to form a church plant committee, agree to the terms outlined in 7a-c, and move forward with the planting process with the help of Hosanna, the Synod, and Minnesota South District. The Highland congregation must formally notify the Hosanna governance board by July 31, 2025 if they intend to proceed with the church planting process. If the current disciples are unwilling to move forward with a church plant, then the property will be sold and all funds retained by Hosanna Main.

8. On June 8, the committee met with Hosanna Highland disciples to present the amended Option 3, as outlined in 7a-d, as its final draft recommendation.

Recommendation:

After careful discussion, consideration and prayer, the committee recommends that Hosanna disciples approve Option 3 as detailed in 7a-d above.

Proposed Motion:

The Hosanna Governance Board, leadership team, staff, and Highland church-planting team-in coordination with the Minnesota South District and the LCMS-will facilitate the committee's recommendation as outlined in 7a-d of the committee's report; throughout the process, the Hosanna leadership team will provide quarterly progress updates.