Taylor Street Church of Christ
Elder Selection Process

Purpose of This Document

This document describes the process by which members of the Taylor Street Church of Christ select elders who will serve the church as spiritual leaders, overseers and shepherds. Early in the history of the church each congregation was under the leadership of a plurality of mature Christians usually designated as elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Acts 15:2; Acts 20:28). The character which elders should exhibit are found in the qualities listed in two passages, I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Although the process for elder selection is not specified in detail in scripture, New Testament examples of the appointment of church leaders and servants include participation of the entire congregation in the selection process (Acts 1:15,23; Acts 6:1-3; Acts 15:22-23). This document provides a process for congregational participation in the elder selection process that is in keeping with these New Testament examples.

Each selection process will begin with an announcement by the existing elders of the need for reaffirmation of existing elders and the need for appointment of new leaders. This announcement will initiate a period of study, prayer and reflection in preparation for the selection process. The selection process will be repeated every 5 years.

Elder Selection Facilitation Committee

For the selection process, the existing elders will appoint an ad hoc Elder Selection Facilitation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Facilitation Committee). This committee will consist of a chairman and 3 to 5 members of the Taylor Street Church, none of whom is a current elder or is willing to accept nomination for service as an elder. The function of this committee is to assist the congregation in fulfilling its responsibilities in the elder selection process.

Facilitation Committee Responsibilities

The elder selection process shall be administered by the Facilitation Committee under the oversight of the existing eldership. The committee will keep the current eldership informed of its progress throughout the process and will seek their advice and assistance as needed.

The Facilitation Committee shall have the responsibility for organizing and carrying out the work necessary for implementation of the processes and procedures specified in this Elder Selection Process document. Its responsibilities include communication, distributing forms, and receiving and safeguarding completed forms.

After tallying the nominations, the Committee shall inform the current eldership which individuals received the minimum of 10 nominations. The current eldership will then discuss with each nominee his willingness and ability to serve as an elder if chosen by the church and ask his permission to have his
name on the Affirmation Forms that will be distributed to the congregation. If he declines further consideration, the Eldership shall accept his decision and hold it in confidence.

The Eldership shall be responsible for receiving written objections to any nominee or candidate submitted during the Candidate Examination period. The process for resolving written objections is set out below.

The Facilitation Committee shall prepare an Affirmation Form with the names of the men that meet the nomination criteria and consent to being considered by the church, arrange for ample printing of the forms, and distribute the forms. The Committee shall make provisions for receiving completed affirmation forms and securely keeping them in a locked box. At the end of the time allotted for affirmation, the locked box will be delivered to a legal professional not associated with Taylor Street Church of Christ.

The legal professional shall not disclose to others specific information on who submitted forms nor the rankings of candidates. When a final determination has been made of which candidates have met the selection criteria (specified in a later section) and against whom no objection remains unresolved, the list of men who were affirmed/reaffirmed will be given to the Committee. Members of the Committee shall go to each man listed on the ballot and inform him of the church’s decision on his candidacy.

Throughout the selection process, the Facilitation Committee may exercise discretion as necessary but may not make any decision that is not clearly within the intent of this document.

Periodic Identification of New Shepherds

At five-year intervals beginning in 2015, the church shall go through the process of evaluating and selecting qualified men who have demonstrated elder/shepherd personal qualities and are willing and prepared to serve the church in the functions of an elder. In each selection process the church membership shall evaluate potential additional elders.

Besides the normal selection of new elders at five-year intervals, special selections may be held at some intermediate time if changing circumstances lead to general recognition of an immediate need for additional elders.

Reaffirmation of Existing Shepherds

Every five years, in conjunction with the normal process of selecting new elders, each elder shall determine if he wishes to step down from his role as an elder. If he wishes to serve an additional term, he must ask for reaffirmation of the support of the congregation for an additional five-year term. His name will then be added to the ballot along with the qualified nominees for service as new elders and he shall be subject to the same selection criteria as the new elder candidates.

No limit is prescribed for the number of terms that an elder may serve, provided that they continue to exhibit character consistent with the qualities found in scripture and that they continue to be affirmed by the congregation as an elder.
**Participation of the Congregation**

All members of the Taylor Street Church of Christ 16 years and older are eligible to nominate fellow members for the role of elder/overseer/shepherd of this church. A member of the Taylor Street Church is defined as anyone who is a baptized believer in Jesus Christ and has “placed membership” at Taylor Street Church of Christ (meaning they have chosen to follow the direction, discipline, and leadership of the Eldership).

Nomination forms will be distributed by the Facilitation Committee in a Sunday morning assembly of the church. After this general distribution, Nomination Forms can be obtained from the Welcomes Center, off the church website, or from any member of the Facilitation Committee. Every member of the church shall be encouraged to fill out a Nomination Form with the names of all the men who he or she believes meets scriptural standards and is well suited for service as an elder. Completed Nomination Forms shall be submitted to the Facilitation Committee (normally by dropping them in a locked box that will be conveniently available for that purpose). The deadline for submission of nominations shall be the close of the Sunday Evening assembly one week after the general distribution of forms. **All Nomination Forms must be signed by the member submitting the form.**

In order for a member to be listed as a candidate on the Affirmation Form for consideration as elder by the full church, the member must have been nominated by at least 10 individual members.

Nominees who choose to become candidates will be invited to attend a meeting with the existing elders for informal discussions of the eldership experience and to address any questions which the candidates may have about serving as an elder. If a nominee has reservations about being able to meet the demands of an elder’s responsibilities, he shall be encouraged to discuss his questions with a currently active elder.

When the Eldership has determined the final list of the men who are willing to be candidates, the Committee shall prepare Affirmation Forms listing the names of the candidates for new elders and the names of the elders seeking reaffirmation.

**Candidate Examination**

Once the list of candidates has been received by the congregation, candidates will participate in a Sunday morning class where a facilitator will ask them some general questions. They will also be asked to fill out a questionnaire that will be given to all members of Taylor Street Church of Christ. This will allow the members to get to know the candidates better.

During this one-week period any member may meet with the Eldership (or submit in writing) to discuss any scriptural reasons why a candidate is not qualified to serve as an elder. Following the Matthew 18 model, the Eldership will arrange a meeting for the member and the candidate to work out the issue. If the Eldership feels that the matter was not resolved and the candidate has not shown the characteristics of a Christian, he will have his name removed from the process. If the candidate is currently an elder, the member shall direct the discussion to the Committee, who will also follow the Matthew 18 model.
Affirmation

All members of the Taylor Street Church of Christ 16 years and older should participate in the affirmation stage of the selection process by submitting completed forms to the Facilitation Committee (normally by dropping them in a locked box provided for that purpose). Forms may be submitted at any time during the period between the general distribution of Affirmation Forms and the termination of the affirmation process at the conclusion of the Sunday evening assembly one week after the general distribution of Affirmation Forms. **All Affirmation Forms are to be submitted anonymously, but be placed in a sealed envelope (provided) with their name on the outside.**

Affirmation Forms shall offer members the options of marking:

- YES, I know this man and can support him as my elder
- YES, I do not know this man very well, but I will still support him as my elder
- No, I do not feel comfortable with this man as my elder

Marking “YES” (on either count) signifies conviction that the candidate should be selected to serve the church as an elder, that he meets scriptural requirements and his personal qualities make him well-suited for effective service as a spiritual shepherd- overseer-leader. It implies the expectation of being able to support him wholeheartedly by working under his leadership/oversight as an elder.

Marking “NO” signifies conviction that there are valid reasons why the candidate should not be selected to serve as an elder.

**For a candidate to be recognized as an elder, he must have at least 82.5% of the ballots cast shall be marked “YES” for the candidate.**

A legal professional shall examine all envelopes to confirm that only one ballot was submitted per member. After this is confirmed, the ballots will be removed from the envelopes and the envelopes will be destroyed, thus making the ballots anonymous. The legal professional will then tally the results as soon as practicable after the termination of the affirmation period. At all times the legal professional shall treat the results as confidential information and shall take measures to prevent any unauthorized use of the information on the forms. After the legal professional has tallied the votes, he/she will then provide a list of names to the Committee who received at least the minimal of 82.5% affirmation. No numbers will be disclosed to either the Committee or the Eldership; all ballots and tabulations will be destroyed one week after the process has concluded.

Appointment

At the first regular Sunday morning assembly of the church after completion of the process of determining who the church has selected to begin or to resume service as elders, the newly selected elders and their spouses shall be set before the congregation for formal installation. After the selected elders are solemnly charged with their responsibilities, the church will be asked to express vocally their acceptance and support. The assembly should conclude with a special prayer, including thanksgiving and invocation of divine blessings for the elders and their spouses.