

EXPECTATIONS OF THE MODERATOR OF PASTORLESS CHURCHES
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY, PRESBYTERY OF WEST VIRGINIA

"The pastor shall be the moderator of the session and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provisions for a moderator. Presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience." (G-3.0201 Book of Order)

The rule for the Presbytery of West Virginia is that the Committee on Ministry will appoint moderators where sessions are without a moderator. Ordinarily this will be a minister member of the Presbytery or a Ruling Elder Commissioned for that purpose. (G-2.1001 Book of Order.)

"The moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the body. He or she shall convene and adjourn the body in accordance with its own action. (G-3.0104 Book of Order)

1. Upon receiving notice that he/she has been asked to serve as Moderator of a Session, the Moderator should immediately contact the Clerk of Session and make him/herself available.
2. He/she should review G.3.02 "The Session," of the Book of Order and pay particular attention to section G-3.0201, "Moderator."
3. The meaning of the connectional system becomes especially important when a church is without an installed pastor. The Moderator appointed by Presbytery should not seek to act as the pastor of the church, but should make every effort to see that the church functions and that the Session is strengthened.
4. If the church is to search for a new pastor:
 - a. If possible, the person designated to be Moderator should participate in the session meeting where procedures and plans for the interim period are discussed. This meeting should take place approximately one month before the departure of the pastor. The exiting pastor may wish to invite the new Moderator to preside over this discussion.
 - b. The Moderator should be supportive in every way of the pastor search process.
 - c. The Moderator shall be informed of the schedule of congregational gatherings, should encourage participation and should help the church and Session in implementation of the interim plans.
5. Expenses for travel, telephone, postage and the like of the Moderator are to be paid by the church. The Moderator should not hesitate to submit such expenses. No other compensation will normally be paid. If a church is unable to pay the Moderator's expenses, that session should apply to Presbytery's Ministry Committee for financial assistance with the expenses.

6. The Moderator shall assure that the church's Sessional Records are presented to Presbytery at the proper time for review (although ordinarily the clerk of Session will deliver them for review).

7. The Presbytery-appointed moderator is not a Session member according to the definition of G-3.0201 Book of Order, and thus does not have voting privileges.

8. As stated in the Book of Order G-3.0201, the Session of a church meets only when the Moderator is present to preside. If it is necessary for a Session to meet when the Presbytery-appointed Moderator cannot be present, for that occasion the Presbytery-appointed Moderator may invite another minister of the Presbytery to preside. The moderator also is the person designated to preside over congregational meetings. If the moderator cannot be present, he or she should coordinate with the clerk of session, Committee on Ministry Chair, or the Stated Clerk to provide for another teaching elder of the Presbytery to be present and moderate.

9. The Moderator should communicate regularly with the Chair of the Committee on Ministry regarding the life and needs of the church and Session.