**PRESBYTERY OF GENEVA**

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

**APPOINTED MODERATORS**

**Authority to appoint moderators.** The *Book of Order* provides that an installed pastor of a congregation shall ordinarily moderate meetings of the congregation (G-1.0504) and meetings of the session (G-3.0104). When there is no installed pastor (or if an installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator), the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator (G-1.0504; G-3.0104).

The Presbytery of Geneva has delegated responsibility for the appointment of moderators for congregations without called pastors to the Committee on Ministry (Manual of Administrative Operations, p. 14). This sets forth COM’s appointment process and its expectations of the appointed moderators and sessions/congregations being served.

**Types of Appointments.** COM generally appoints moderators in two ways:

(1) ***Part of a Temporary Pastoral Relationship***. When a covenant for a temporary pastoral relationship is entered into between a session and a Minister of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Ruling Elder or candidate, COM may include the appointment of the temporary pastor to service as moderator for the term of the relationship. The covenant between the pastor and the session (approved by COM) shall include reference to that appointment. See “Non-PCUSA Pastors in Temporary Pastoral Relationships” below for appointing a minister of a Christian denomination other than PCUSA as moderator as part of a temporary pastoral relationship.

(2) ***Temporary Moderator.*** In other circumstances when a moderator is needed, including when a congregation has no pastor, COM shall appoint a temporary moderator of the session and/or for congregational meetings. A temporary moderator may be appointed for continuing service, with or without a specific term, or for specific meetings of the session and/or congregation.

**Who May Be Appointed**. All teaching elder members of the Presbytery and Commissioned Ruling Elders of the Presbytery are eligible to be appointed as temporary moderators. In addition, the COM may appoint a ruling elder within the Presbytery who has relevant training and/or experience to serve as a temporary moderator.

**Factors to Consider**. Before appointing a temporary moderator, COM will endeavor to determine the usual meeting times of the session and/or congregation, whether meetings are held in person or electronically, and the typical length of the meeting, so that information can be communicated to the potential moderator. Particularly when the temporary moderator is to serve on a continuing basis, *before* making the appointment, COM will ask the clerk of session for input on any preferences the session may have for a moderator. COM will encourage the potential temporary moderator and the clerk of session to consult with each other to make sure schedules and expectations are compatible.

**Compensation of a Temporary Moderator**. The minimum fee to be offered to a temporary moderator to moderate a meeting of the session/congregation is $50 per meeting, plus mileage at the current IRS rate. Any expenses incurred by the temporary moderator will be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts to the session.

**Additional Services**. A temporary moderator is not expected to perform other services for the session/congregation or attend any other church functions beyond the official meetings as part of accepting a temporary moderator appointment. If the temporary moderator agrees occasionally to provide additional services for the congregation (for example, weddings, funerals, home or hospital calling), the temporary moderator and session shall agree on the compensation for such services in advance. Preaching and leading worship services is covered by the Pulpit Supply Guidelines. Note that any agreement between a session and a pastor, including temporary moderators, for more than limited, occasional services, requires the approval of COM.

**Duties of the Moderator**

***Authority***. The *Book of Order* describes the role of moderator as follows: “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 actions.” (G-3.0104).

***The Moderator will:***

1. Be familiar with the Book of Order, including the requirements for meetings of a session/congregation and the respective responsibilities and authority of the session and congregation, as well as any specific bylaws or other rules or procedures of the particular session/congregation, and see that the requirements are fulfilled.

2. Be present and preside at regular and called meetings of the session at times negotiated with the session and/or clerk, ensuring the session meets at least quarterly. Call special meetings when appropriate, or when requested by at least two Session members.

3. Confer with the Clerk of Session prior to each meeting to prepare an agenda of business for the meeting.

4. Since the focus of meeting is to be engaged in the life and work of God, the meeting shall be orderly and effective. Ensure the meeting opens and closes with prayer, and use prayer and reflection during the meeting when helpful. The moderator will:

1. Conduct the meeting in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order.
2. Keep the business of the meeting moving forward in a timely manner.
3. Lead a discernment process as appropriate before a vote is taken.
4. Invite participation and collaboration.
5. See that decisions are assigned so that they may be carried out.
6. Develop a plan to follow up and hold members accountable.

5. Give leadership to ensure the maintenance of the worship, ministry and witness of the church, its regular services of worship, educational programs, whatever is usual and required in the life of the church, in accordance with the duties of Session as spelled out in the Book of Order (G-3.0201). This includes ***working with the session*** to ensure that:

1. Provisions are made for the regular worship of the congregation.
2. The sacraments are properly celebrated under the direction of the session, and that the authorization, including dates, is included in the minutes.
3. Pastoral care is provided to members of the congregation.
4. Issues within the congregation that may need to be addressed are identified and attended to.
5. New elders and deacons are properly trained and arrangements are made for the ordination and installation of officers.
6. The clerk of session and treasurer are properly elected by the session.
7. The annual budget is adopted by the session.
8. The minutes of the meetings are approved and signed in the clerk’s book when appropriate.

6. Moderate the congregational meetings of the church, seeing that proper notice and procedures are followed, and when appropriate, that the actions of the congregation are reported to the presbytery through the Committee on Ministry.

7. Contact COM for a substitute temporary moderator if the Moderator is not the installed pastor and will be absent from a meeting(s). See G-1.0504 (congregation meeting) and G-3.0104 (session meeting) for when an installed pastor is to invite a substitute to moderate in the absence of the installed pastor.

8. Serve as a tie between the church and the Presbytery, especially when the church is without a pastor. The Moderator should:

1. Work with the clerk of session to be explicit about who, in every occasion, will be in contact with COM with requests, sharing of information and follow up, recognizing that the moderator and clerk may have differing expectations and will need to come to a common approach.
2. Keep the session informed about Presbytery activities, including policies impacting the congregation and resources available to help the congregation.
3. Alert COM about any situations in the congregation that may require COM consultation, attention or action.
4. Complete periodic reports as requested by COM and at the close of the relationship as moderator on the health of the congregation and session, accomplishments and future needs.

**Federated and Union Churches**

Normally churches uniting two or more denominations will have created bylaws or a constitution specifically addressing issues concerning the formation of a board, its moderator, officers of the board, meeting, quorum, substitution for moderators unable to serve at a meeting or meetings, and an election process for its members.

When a PCUSA pastor is an installed pastor serving a federated or union church and is the moderator of the church’s board, the Presbytery, through COM, will supply a temporary moderator when the installed pastor cannot serve in that capacity or is unable to invite a substitute moderator in accordance with G-1.0504 (congregation meeting) and G-3.0104 (session meeting). It is the pastor’s responsibility to contact COM concerning the request. If necessary, a gracious consultation with the federated or union denomination involved should be made to assure agreement and continuance of leadership.

**Non-PCUSA Pastors in Temporary Pastoral Relationships**

A minister of a Non-PCUSA Christian church may be appointed to serve as the moderator of the session and/or for meetings of the congregation upon meeting the following requirements:

1. The minister is in service in a temporary pastoral relationship with a congregation in the Presbytery, and the appointment as moderator is for that congregation;
2. The minister has been enrolled as a temporary member of the presbytery, having affirmed the order and discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in a manner satisfactory to the presbytery;
3. The minister has demonstrated competency satisfactory to COM in PCUSA polity and the policies and practices of the Presbytery of Geneva, by training and/or experience, or has agreed in writing to a specific plan of acquiring such competency acceptable to COM; and
4. The minister agrees to abide by the provisions of the *Book of Order* and Presbytery of Geneva policies and procedures.

Reference: GA Authoritative Interpretation GA (2018, 69, 73, 626-27, Item 06-21, Req 18-01)

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