

The Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois is submitting an overture for the 223rd General Assembly. We are asking you to consider concurrence. Thank you.

It was VOTED to submit the following overture to the 223rd General Assembly for approval.

Proposal: To amend G-3.0201 Composition and Responsibilities

As follows:

The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors. All members of the session are entitled to vote. The pastor shall be the moderator of the session, and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. *In the case of the sickness or absence of the pastor or designated moderator, the pastor or designated moderator may appoint a member of the session to preside, or the session, after having obtained the approval of the pastor or designated moderator, may convene and elect another of its own members to preside. Such an appointment should not be routine and shall only be for a single meeting.* 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.

Rationale:

In many presbyteries, we have a shortage of ministers. We also have many churches that are not served by a minister. We have numerous ministers who give of their time to moderate sessions that they do not serve as pastor. Many congregations and pastors are having conversations about part time pastoral leadership, bi-vocational pastors, and temporary pastoral leadership. This results in the need for both moderators and flexibility.

While recent changes to Robert's rules and the Book of Order allow the use of technology to allow for meetings to occur when members are physically separated, for many churches these are not viable options. We have hearing issues that make phone conferencing difficult. We have issues with technology and its accessibility in many of our congregations. While these options are good, and a step in the right direction, they aren't practical or even functional for all congregations.

While good planning may reduce the need for this measure, there are emergencies and special circumstances. It is not always possible to reschedule a meeting, and some business that comes before the Session comes on very short notice with a short turnaround needed. In those cases, this measure would allow for the work of the church to continue.

This measure is not intended to allow elders to be appointed to moderate the session of the congregation of which they are a member on a routine basis or for an indefinite period of time.

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