

## Winter 2022 Polity Exam

### Section I: Constitutional Heritage

You are pastor of Third Presbyterian Church. You notice that for several months the session has been focusing on small details of church operations. With that in mind, you organize a series of reflections for the session around G-3.0201 which emphasizes broad concepts of session responsibility.

G-3.0201 states in part:

The session shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a **community of faith, hope, love, and witness**. As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the session shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), **the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed congregations have identified themselves throughout history (F-1.0303)** and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304). (emphasis added)

**REQUIRED RESPONSES:** *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. In preparation for the session's first reflection on G-3.0201, identify and quote the relevant portions of four (4) citations from the Directory for Worship (e.g., W-0.0000). The four (4) citations must show ways for the congregation to be and become a
  - community of faith (one [1] citation),
  - community of hope (one [1] citation),
  - community of love (one [1] citation), and
  - community of witness (one [1] citation).

Clearly indicate which citation relates to which aspect of community.

2. You are preparing for the second reflection on G-3.0201 for the session. Building on your work in Required Response 1, write a narrative presentation showing how "the notes" (F-1.0303) can serve as a guide for leading the congregation to be and become a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. End the presentation with two (2) follow-up questions for the session to explore how these aspects of community and notes might influence the session's leadership at Third Presbyterian Church.

## Section II: Constitutional Order for the Particular Church

You are the Pastor for Youth at Bright Horizons Presbyterian Church and have just completed a discussion on discipleship with the confirmation class.

Jordan, one of the sophomores in the class, approaches you afterward and says, “Pastor, I want to learn more about becoming a disciple. I think God may be calling me. Does that mean I should study to be a pastor like you?”

**REQUIRED RESPONSES:** (*Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.*)

1. Identify at least three (3) points of polity raised by the scenario and provide a citation from the *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000) for each point of polity identified. Quote the most relevant portion of each citation used. The same part of the *Book of Order* (F, G, W, D) may not be used for all of the citations provided; that is, at least two (2) different parts of the *Book of Order* must be cited within the response. A citation may be used more than once as long as a different relevant portion of the citation is quoted. Briefly discuss the citations and align them with their corresponding points of polity.
2. Focusing on polity and building on your work in Required Response 1, describe how you would engage the topic of discipleship and call with Jordan.

### Section III: Application to Ministry

The pastor and some members of Westminster Presbyterian Church had been lobbying session members to purchase a van. When the pastor brought the issue to session, they voted to postpone consideration of buying a van until next year. The next day, the pastor asked the board of trustees to research purchase of a van. The trustees found a van with favorable pricing and reported back to the pastor. Then, the pastor called a special congregational meeting for the following Sunday for the purpose of purchasing and financing a van. At the meeting, the motion to acquire the van was overwhelmingly approved.

After the congregational meeting, Dana, a member of session, was concerned about what had transpired and reviewed the *Book of Order*. Dana discussed these concerns with the pastor and the clerk of session. They agreed that Dana would bring these concerns to the next meeting of session.

**REQUIRED RESPONSES:** (*Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.*)

1. Identify and discuss briefly at least three (3) points of polity raised by this scenario, choosing at least one (1) citation from the *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000) for each point raised. A different citation from the *Book of Order* must be chosen for each point of polity identified.
2. Building on your work in Required Response 1, discuss how the session should proceed in response to the polity concerns raised by the scenario.