

Fall 2022 Polity Exam

Section I: Constitutional Heritage

F-1.0302 names **the marks of the Church** as the unity, the holiness, the catholicity, and the apostolicity of the Church.

Regarding the session, G-3.0201 says in part:

...As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the session shall keep before it **the marks of the Church (F-1.0302)**, ...

In light of this charge, the session has responsibility and power to:

- a. *provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard...*
- b. *provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received...*
- c. *nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ...*

(bold type added for emphasis)

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

Focusing on the polity and using at least three (3) different citations from the *Book of Order* (other than G-3.0201), write an essay demonstrating how **the marks of the Church (F-1.0302)** provide a basis for the session's "responsibility and power" in the three paragraphs of G-3.0201 labeled a, b, and c. All references from the *Book of Order* must be in the form X-0.0000.

Section II: Constitutional Order for the Particular Church

You are the pastor of Fair Woods Presbyterian Church. At a meeting of the session, the moderator of the congregational nominating committee (a member of the session) announces that the committee has a full slate of nominees and asks that the session call a congregational meeting for the election of ruling elders and deacons.

Alex, a ruling elder and member of session, looks over the list of nominees for ruling elder and expresses an objection to the nomination of Frank. "The last time Frank was on session he didn't do anything, was silent at session meetings, and never attended committee meetings, among other things." Alex then moves that the nominating committee be dismissed and the session function as a nominating committee.

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

1. Identify at least four (4) points of polity raised in this scenario. Provide a citation from the *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000) for each of the points of polity. Discuss briefly how each citation applies to its point of polity. A citation may be used more than once as long as a different relevant portion of the citation is quoted.
2. Building on Required Response 1, describe how you, as pastor and moderator of session, would respond during the session meeting to Alex's comments and motion. A verbatim response could be included but is not required.
3. Building on Required Response 1, prepare an outline for a handout for the session on the process of nominating, electing, and examining ruling elders and deacons.

Section III: Application to Ministry

At the church social time, four members of Union Presbyterian Church are chatting with you, the pastor, about ministry in the PC(USA).

Joan: My grandfather just finished his Master of Divinity. Does that mean he is a PC(USA) minister?

Dallas: My neighbor is a PC(USA) minister, but he is not a pastor. He is head of a non-profit organization that serves foster children. How can he still be a minister?

Micki: My former college roommate just completed a year as an interim PC(USA) pastor and is now unemployed. Does that mean she is no longer a minister?

Raul: My cousin is a candidate to become a PC(USA) minister. She presided at communion last month when the pastor was on vacation. Don't you need to be a minister to do that?

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

1. Identify four (4) points of polity, one (1) for each of the questions raised by the four (4) church members. Provide and discuss briefly a citation from the *Book of Order* (e.g., X-0.0000) for each point of polity, clearly relating the citation to its relevant point of polity. A citation may be used more than once as long as a different relevant portion of the citation is quoted.
2. As pastor of the church, respond directly during the social time to the questions of each of the four members. The responses should be verbatim, not a description of how you would respond.