

Newton Presbytery to Change Name to Presbytery of the Boondocks

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April 1 - After years of members in our Presbytery wondering why we are known as "Newton Presbytery," it has been proposed that at our next meeting we change our designation to "Presbytery of the Boondocks." Where the town of Newton's name once held a certain cache and *je ne sais quoi*, as the years have gone by and our mid-point has shifted south, the term has lost its relevance.

And compared to the rest of the state, we are truly a presbytery set apart. Other than Morristown and a few churches near it where civilization still can be found, the rest of our territory is farmland and state mandated woodlands. Just ask members of any Morristown-area church where they're headed when presbytery meets in Sussex, Washington, Franklin, Branchville, Phillipsburg, or Stirling, and they'll readily tell you that it's "out in the boondocks."

Stated Clerk Jeremy Campbell agrees that perhaps it's time to make the name change. "Most of New Jersey doesn't even know we're up here," he opined to the New York Times. "According to our Book of Order, AFD*-4.01.17, 'when a council of the church deems it right, appropriate, timely, and cost-effective to change their name (other than to name it after a company for corporate-sponsorship – see §-2371-013) then with a majority vote of that body's membership, they may send their recommendation of a name change up-the-chain of command.' I think that it's completely within our polity to make this timely change."

Presbytery Leader Jeanne Radak has some misgivings. "I kind of like the name 'Newton Presbytery,' but I did have to look it up on a map when I applied here. I know there are other places in the US that might think they are more boondocksian, but if we can lay claim to the name now, any time you hear that term you'll think of us, and that carries weight in and of itself. Perhaps this is a good change to embrace."

While others have suggested "Skylands Presbytery," or "The Northwest New Jersey Counties of Morris, Sussex, Warren and a Few Other Pieces of Counties Presbytery," *Presbytery of the Boondocks* seems to have risen to the top of our members' collective consciousness whenever they think of another church farther than 5 miles away. Now seems to be the right time to make this change, while we still have churches.

**AFD stands for April Fool's Day*

