May 2026

NEUSE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION NEUSE NEWS

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176 Piney Grove Church Rd La Grange NC 28551 | 252-566-9478 | Hours: M-F 8:30AM - 4:00PM

From Keith

With the drought that we are having right now, it probably isn't that hard to imagine, but have you ever seen a garden that hasn't been watered in a month?

The plants are brown. The soil is cracked. Nothing is growing. The most that is happening is dust is blowing. You can have the best seeds in the world, but if the soil isn't healthy, you won't see any life.

The truth is, many of our churches are like that garden. We have the best message in the world—the Good and Great News of Jesus Christ. But if our "soil" (our church health) is unhealthy, the message that we have has a hard time growing and spreading.

Last month, we talked about Operation: Healthy Churches. We talked about resetting our "operating system." This month, I want to talk about the WHY. Why does this matter so much? Why can't we just keep doing what we've always done?

Let's get one thing straight right from the jump.

The most important thing in the world isn't church health. It isn't a great strategy. It isn't even a full building.

The most important thing is the GOSPEL.

The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only hope for our world. It's the only thing that saves. It's the only thing that lasts.

But here's the blunt honesty: An unhealthy church actually HIDES the Gospel from the community. When a church is sick, people don't see Jesus; they see the mess.

That is why Operation: Healthy Churches matters. We aren't trying to be "healthy" just to feel good. We are getting healthy so nothing stands in the way of the Good News!

Continued

From Keith, cont.

Everything you want for your community—more people meeting Jesus, more lives changed, and more hope in our streets and cul-de-sacs—exists on the other side of churches who are on mission because of their passion for Jesus and the health they exhibit.

Here are 8 reasons why a healthy church is absolutely essential for our mission:

1. Healthy Things Grow

In nature, if something is healthy, it grows. It's a rule. You don't have to force a healthy tree to grow leaves. It just happens. When a church is healthy, it naturally starts to reach new people. If a church hasn't seen anyone meet Jesus in a long time, it's not a gospel problem. It's a health problem.

2. It Stops the "Drama"

We've all been there. A church gets stuck in silly arguments about the color of the carpet or the volume of the music. Blunt honesty: those fights only happen when a church is unhealthy and has lost its focus. A healthy church is too busy chasing the mission to get stuck in small dramas. Peace comes from health.

3. It Makes Disciples, Not Just "Members"

An unhealthy church just wants more people in the seats. They want "members" to help pay the bills. But a healthy church wants to make disciples. They want to see people grow to be more like Jesus. A healthy "operating system" focuses on helping people take their next step with the Lord every single week.

4. It Protects the Pastor and Leaders

I love our pastors and church leaders. I love sitting down with them to encourage, support, pray for, and coach them. But I also know many of you are tired. In an unhealthy church, the pastor has to do everything. He's the preacher, the janitor, and the referee. In a healthy church, the whole body works together. Everyone uses their gifts to advance the gospel and serve one another. This stops the pastor from burning out and keeps the mission moving forward.

5. It Attracts Younger Generations

Students and Young adults can smell 'fake' from a mile away. My friend, they aren't looking for a perfect show. In fact, when they see something that is too 'polished' they see something that is covering over 'fake'. They are looking for a healthy family. They want to be part of something real and mission-minded. If we want to reach the next generation in our churches, we have to have healthy churches they can call home.

6. It Changes the Neighborhood

A healthy church is a "Great Commandment" church. That means it loves its neighbors. When a church is healthy, the people living across the street notice. They see the kindness. They see the service. A healthy church isn't just a building; it's a blessing to the whole city. Simply put, a healthy church makes their community noticeably better.

I often ask churches that are struggling a very blunt question: "If your church closed its doors TODAY, how long would it take the community to notice?" The truth is? The answer usually depends on the season. If it's spring or summer, they'll notice within a few weeks. But not because they miss your ministry. They'll notice because the grass is overgrown and the bushes look like a total eyesore.

7. It Uses Money Wisely

In an unhealthy system, money is often wasted on things that don't matter. But when we reset our system to be missional, every dollar is used for the Kingdom. Stewardship is a sign of health. When a church is healthy, people are excited to give because they see the impact their money is making.

8. It Brings Glory to God

This is the big one. When Jesus talked to his disciples in Matthew 5:1-2, He was setting the stage for them to be "salt and light." A healthy church shows the world what God is like. When we are healthy, we are a living advertisement for the power of the Gospel. Our health isn't about us—it's about Him.

Let's Get to Work

I am so thankful for the work you do. I see your heart. I see your hard work. But I don't want you to just work hard; I want you to work **healthy**.

We are **Serving Side by Side** in this Association. You don't have to figure out this "reset" alone. We are in this together. I was sitting down with a deacon chair this week working with him on a current issue the church is going through. Now this church has been generally disconnected from the association for many years. During this conversation, I felt the need to tell him of the deep desire the association has to come along churches to encourage, train, resource, and mobilize. I spoke of a few of the ways the association has come along side of churches over the past few months and he was completely shocked. He didn't know the association did those things. In fact, he asked if I would send him a list of all the ways the association assists

Continued

From Keith, cont.

churches and I told him I would. I also told him in the meantime, the short answer is that if there is a question, a need, or a help all they have to do is simply alert us. If it is something that is out of the wheelhouse of the association, there is a 100% chance we can connect them with someone that has that answer.

My friend, you are not alone!

The Gospel is too important to let an unhealthy "operating system" slow us down.

Remember our vision: Being a **CATALYST** to encourage and support you to be Great Commission and Great Commandment churches.

So, here is my challenge for you this month: Look at your church through the eyes of someone across the street. Do they see a healthy family on mission? Or do they just see an eyesore?

The best part? Everything can change starting today. Let's sit at the feet of Jesus, reset our hearts, and get our churches healthy for the sake of the Gospel.

The resurrection of Jesus gives us the power to change. If He can come back from the dead, He can certainly help us fix our church's "operating system."

What is one area of health you want to focus on this month? Let's stop looking for the "living among the dead" and start building churches that are full of life.

How can I pray for you in this area?

How can I help you take that first step or maybe that next step?

In Christ and in partnership,

Keith

Ault Scholarship
of Neuse Baptist Association

2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:

Morgan Paige Brimberry
Trinity Missionary Baptist Church
Wayne Community College
Sonography
$500

Jimmy Dale
Mount Nelson Baptist Church
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Doctor of Ministry
$500

Ezekiel Nehemiah Harrison
Love Memorial Baptist Church
NC State University
Computer Science
$500

Luis Oscar Miranda
Community Baptist Church of La Grange
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Master of Divinity
$500

Avery Kathryn Stamper
Gateway Community Church
East Carolina University
Communications
$500

Congratulations to these recipients!

*Our Scholarship Committee has decided to pause the Ault Scholarship of Neuse Baptist Association for 2027 to give funds time to grow and strengthen the program for future recipients. This year's applicants are encouraged to re-apply in **2028** if they are still pursuing their academic endeavors at that time.*

The CHURCH NEWS Page

As Submitted by the Churches

Deep Run First (Bert Potter) 74 families were served through the monthly Food Bank last month. Special activities for Easter included a Maundy Thursday service with communion, an Egg Hunt, Sunrise Service and Easter worship. WMU is making blankets for Kennedy Home and collecting razors for NBA's Annual Project. Individually wrapped snacks are being collected for Kitty Askins.

Emmaus (Jim Willoughby) AAEO goal of $1500 was exceeded; Praise! All mothers who attend worship on Mother's Day will be recognized and presented a gift of appreciation. Monthly Senior Luncheon will be May 14 at Noon. There is no charge and everyone is welcome to attend. Youth Sunday is scheduled for May 24 at 10:45 AM. VBS 2026 is planned for July 19-23.

Gateway (Thayer Stamper) A new Senior Adult Coffee Hour began in March; at 9:30 AM each Friday, Senior Adults are invited to the Thomas Building to enjoy coffee and fellowship together. Moms and Tots Play Date on April 6 was such a success that they decided to meet again on Monday, May 4 at 10:30 am. A team from Gateway will serve at the Community Soup Kitchen in Goldsboro on May 7. Mothers will be honored and babies will be dedicated on Mother's Day, May 10. Missions Monday — to raise funds for ministry partner, Havesters International — will be Monday, May 11 at Pizza Inn from 5-8 PM. Family Movie Night will be enjoyed Friday, May 15. Kingdom Quest VBS is planned for June 26-28 for ages 3 - Rising 6th Grade.

Kinston First (Jon Hoover) The church sponsored a booth at the Down East Christian Music Festival on April 18 and gave out free water, candy and other items to passers-by. FBC was well represented at EPIC Center's Walk 4 Life 5K on the morning of April 18. "Adventure HQ VBS 3.0" is planned for June 12-14.

Love Memorial (Richard Toler) *Sonshiners* loaded into the Church Bus and visited with their Homebound church family to share a smile and sing old familiar hymns with them, on April 16. Love participated in a community revival, "Community Camp Meeting 2026", held April 26-29. The choir sang Sunday night while Falling Creek Community Church hosted, and Pastor Richard shared the Word on Tuesday night while Love Memorial hosted. "Emerald Crossing" VBS is planned for June 22-26 for ages Pre-K through 6th Grade and Adults.

New Hope (Scott Wright) Last month, New Hope gave above their goal in helping to fill the NBA's Annual Project, collecting men's deodorant and work shirts. Spring Revival services were well-attended, with Pastor Scott as well as four other men of the church bringing challenges from God's Word. On April 19, the Better 2Gether Sunday School and Church Campaign was kicked off, which will continue until May 17. The AFTERSHOCK Teen Ministry is set to begin Wednesday evenings in May.

Pinkney (Steven Gay) The Egg Hunt was a success this year with the Easter Story being shared and a bounce house and lunch for all to enjoy. Ladies' Bible Study, "Alive: Growing in Your Relationship with Jesus" continues. Men's Meeting was held 3/31 with a devotion and time of discussion led by Pastor Steven. Women enjoyed their Ladies' Banquet with guest speaker Debbie Cann on April 22. Shaving cream continues to be collected for NBA Annual Project.

Rivermont (John Morton) Homecoming will be celebrated May 3rd, with Guest Speaker, former pastor Luis Miranda and a Homecoming Luncheon following worship. Mothers will be honored on Mother's Day, May 10.

Rosewood Pastor Tim Lipp has resigned to serve as Pastor of Mt. Olive FBC.

Seven Springs (Phillip James) Children enjoyed an Egg Hunt for Jesus directly after the service on Easter Sunday. Several participated in Visitation on Saturday, April 18 to visit and invite those in the surrounding area to church. The Oak Grove Boys are scheduled for a time of praise and worship on May 3rd at 6PM.

The Way (Carlos Peralta) Baptism was celebrated on April 12.

Union Pastor Jason Hutcheson has resigned. Church has called Joe Thornton to serve as their Interim Pastor. View the church's announcement seeking a Bi-Vocational Pastor further in this newsletter.

Re-Discovering the Value of Neuse Baptist Association

In the busyness of weekly ministry—planning services, visiting the sick, and managing budgets—it is easy to forget that your church doesn't have to "go it alone." As a member of the **Neuse Baptist Association (NBA)**, you have an entire storehouse of resources and a support team standing behind you.

Our vision is to be a **Catalyst** that encourages and supports you in being a Great Commission and Great Commandment church. To do that, we focus on being your primary **Resourcer**. These aren't just "NBA perks"—they are assets that belong to your church family.

Resources Already at Your Fingertips

Are you currently taking advantage of these eight benefits included in your partnership?

- **The NBA Vans & Trailers:** Don't let transportation costs stall your mission. Whether it's a youth mission trip or a community outreach event, these resources are maintained and ready for your church to check out and head out.
- **Leadership Coaching:** Pastors and church leaders shouldn't have to navigate complex seasons in a vacuum. You have access to experienced coaches who serve as a confidential sounding board and strategic partner for your ministry.
- **Professional Training Space:** If your sanctuary is undergoing renovations or you need a "neutral site" for a focused leadership retreat, our association office offers professional meeting spaces equipped for your needs.
- **Information & Expert Guidance:** From navigating the latest tax laws for churches to finding reliable background check services, we serve as your research department, providing the answers you need when you need them.
- **Outreach & Event Equipment:** Planning a block party or a community festival? Before you buy expensive equipment, check with us! We have trailers and resources designed specifically to help you engage your neighbors.
- **Pulpit Supply & Interim Support:** Whether it's a planned sabbatical or an unexpected vacancy, we maintain a network of vetted, high-quality speakers and leaders to ensure your congregation is well-fed during transitions.
- **Specialized Ministry Tools:** We provide access to demographic studies, community mapping, and church health assessments that help you understand your mission field with scientific clarity.
- **The Shared Wisdom of the Network:** Your church has access to the collective "brain trust" of every other church in the NBA. We facilitate the connections that allow you to learn from the successes (and mistakes) of your peers.

It's Your Association

The NBA exists to serve you. We aren't just an office down the road; we are an extension of your staff and a partner in your mission. If you haven't utilized one of these resources lately, give us a call—we'd love to help you put these tools to work for the Kingdom.

Reminder: We are your Resourcer, Encourager, Mobilizer, and Trainer. Let's make the most of our partnership as we fulfill the Great Commission together.

THANK YOU to the 28 NBA Churches that have completed their ACP (*as of 4/22/26*):

Abide
Adamsville
Cabin
Calvary
Community Golds.
Davis Grove
Deep Run
Emmaus
Falling Creek
Fremont
Grainger
Immanuel
Jordan's Chapel
La Grange
Love Memorial
Madison Avenue
Mount Nelson
Neuse
New Beginning
New Hope
Pinkney
Restoration
Rivermont
Sandy Bottom
Seven Springs
The Way
Trinity
Union

If you don't see your church on this list, please complete your ACP as soon as possible by visiting https://form.jotform.com/252114138154145.

Transitional Interim Ministry training seeks to equip pastors and church leaders to help churches make the most of this transitional time period. During this training, you will be provided effective tools that can be used by either a traditional or a transitional interim pastor, as well as the pastor search committee.

The training is two days, from 9 AM to 5 PM each day, with lunch and snacks provided. The **$85** registration fee covers meals, snacks and materials.

If you have completed the Transitional Interim Training within the past five years, you can refresh your skills at one of these events for only $45!

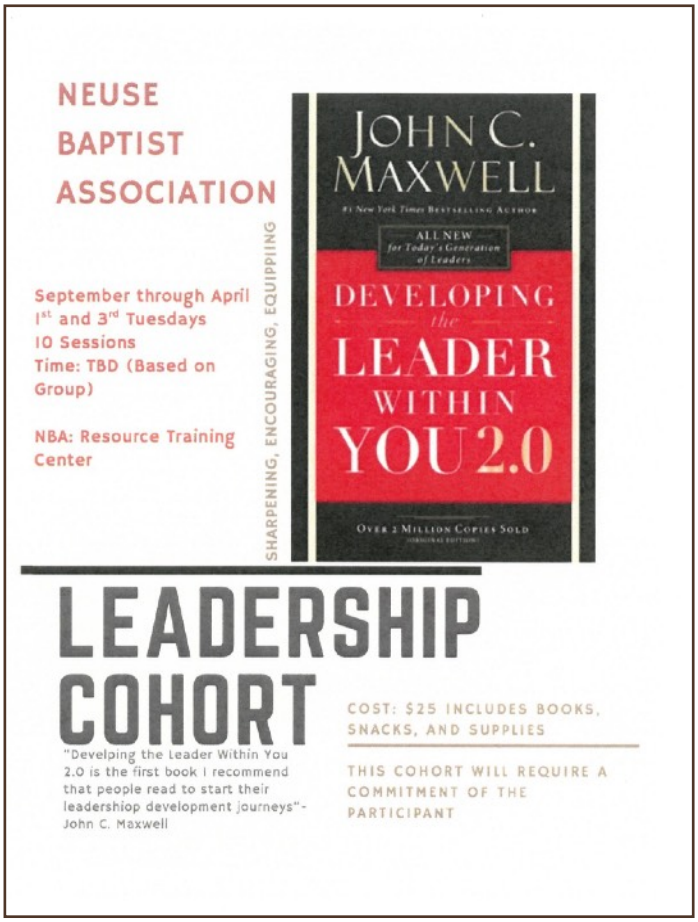
NBA is partnering with South Roanoke Association for this training. For more information or to register, call the NBA Office or email keith@nbachurches.com.

NABS
Neuse Association of Baptist Seniors

Please join us for our
Spring NABS Luncheon

Thursday, May 14
Noon
at the NBA Office

We'll provide a fried chicken lunch, but we ask that you **RSVP by May 11** to **wendy@nbachurches.com** so that we know how many to prepare for.
A representative from Provision *(formerly NC Baptist Foundation)* will be with us to discuss wise financial stewardship for individuals and churches.
Email **wendy@nbachurches.com** or call 252-566-9478 to RSVP!



Union Baptist Church is seeking a Spirit-led, **Bi-vocational Pastor** to lead our congregation in worship, ministry, and community outreach. We are a Southern Baptist congregation looking for a shepherd who balances a passion for the pulpit with a heart for the welfare and oversight of our church family.

(This announcement has been edited for space. To see full announcement visit nbachurches.com/newsletter/ministry-openings.)

Qualifications

The ideal candidate must meet the following criteria as established by our church by-laws:

- **Scriptural Integrity:** Must meet the qualifications for leadership as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
- **Denominational Standing:** Must be an ordained Southern Baptist minister in good standing (or scheduled for ordination).
- Note: Candidates pending ordination may be extended a call contingent upon the *approval of the appropriate ordination committee.*

Compensation & Benefits

This is an indefinite-term call with a structured benefits package:

- **Salary:** $20,000.00/yr.
- **Vacation:** 1 week (Years 1-2); 2 weeks (Years 3-4); 3 weeks (Year 5+). Vacation time cannot be accumulated and carried over from year to year.
- **Sick Leave:** 1 week (Years 1); 2 weeks (Years 2); 3 weeks (Year 3); 4 weeks (Year 4+). Sick leave cannot be accumulated and carried over from year to year. However, the deacons may appropriate additional sick time if needed, with the approval of the church.

How to Apply

Please submit your resume, cover letter, and a link to a recent sermon (if available) by mail or email to:

Union Baptist Church
c/o Laura Williford
209 Firetower Rd.
La Grange, NC 28551
Unionbaptistchurch1928@gmail.com

Union Baptist Church is a community of believers dedicated to the Gospel.
We look forward to seeing how God leads us to our next under shepherd.

NEUSE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL PROJECT

ALL ITEMS ARE FOR MEN ONLY

PERSONAL CARE GIFT BAGS FOR SEASONAL FARM WORKERS

The following donations are still needed:

- **Gently-used, clean, button down long-sleeved work shirts** *in sizes Small, Medium, Large and XL only*
- **Ball caps / sun hats / sun visors**

Items need to be dropped off at the NBA Office on or before May 22, 2026

Special thanks to the Pedro & Gabriela Trejo Family and Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer of Kinston for their tremendous help with this project!

WAYNE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL has employment openings available for:
Middle School Dean of Students, High School English Teacher, and High School History Teacher for the 2026-2027 school year.
Please visit https://waynechristian.org/about/employment/ for more information and to apply.

Register for Engaging Exposition!

You're invited to join us for Engaging Exposition — Southeastern Seminary's annual preaching conference designed to equip local church pastors to preach and lead biblically. This year, the conference will center around the theme “Leading from the Pulpit.” This two-day event will include practical breakout sessions, free resources, and opportunities to network with like-minded pastors, as well as main sessions led by H.B. Charles, Jr., Scott Pace, and Hershael York. **Register by July 31, 2026 to lock in the early-bird ticket price: $40 for students and $50 for general admission. We can't wait to see you in September!**
sebts.edu/events

Contributions from Churches, March, 2026

Churches	Mar, 2026	YTD 2026
Abide	100.00	300.00
Adamsville		
Anointed Vision		
Bethel	211.76	681.79
Cabin	501.75	501.75
Calvary		
Casa del Dios		500.00
Community La Grange		50.00
Community Saulston		
Davis Grove		
Deep Run First		
Emmaus	291.20	1,093.82
Falling Creek	209.28	763.37
Fremont	500.00	500.00
Gateway	1,200.00	3,600.00
Goldsboro First		1,215.00
Grainger		
Horeb		
Immanuel	105.00	210.00
Jordan's Chapel		900.00
Kinston First		
La Grange First		
Love Memorial	447.63	1,126.00
Madison Avenue	596.60	1,639.46
Mount Nelson		5,818.10
Neuse	1,612.27	3,959.98
New Beginning		50.00
New Hope		
Northview		
Nueva Amanecer		
Pikeville First		
Pineview		
Pinkney	412.18	1,120.05
Restoration		
Rivermont	457.65	1,797.50
Rosewood First		
Sandy Bottom		1,405.16
Seven Springs	800.00	1,600.00
Snow Hill First	1,429.73	3,743.90
Spilman Memorial		400.00
The Way		
Trinity		250.00
Union		400.00
Total CHURCHES	8,875.05	33,625.88

God has worked in a mighty way in the Carolinas, and we have seen many moments where He has done "immeasurably more beyond what we can ask or imagine!" Come join us as we take you Beyond the Box to hear the first-hand stories of how God is working through Operation Christmas Child in proclaiming the gospel to children around the world!

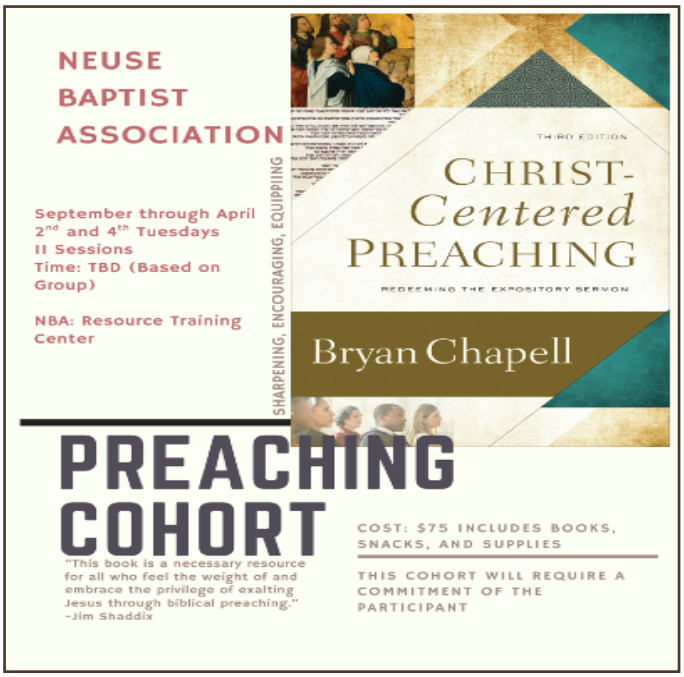
DATE: May 16, 2026

TIME: 10:00am - 12:00pm

LOCATION: Freedom Fellowship Church
(469 Joe Nunn Road, Kinston)

RSVP: by May 10 to Jessica Ogren at jogren2608@gmail.com

For any questions, please contact:
Jessica Ogren (Neuse River Area OCC Area Coordinator at *jogren2608@gmail.com*



Coming Up on the Calendar

All events will take place at the NBA Office unless stated otherwise.

May

04-05 — Transitional Interim Training, South Roanoke Baptist Association
07 – National Day of Prayer
10 – Happy Mother's Day!
11 — RSVP Deadline for NABS Lunch
14 – NABS Luncheon, Noon @ NBA Office
15 – Items Due for JUNE & JULY combo Newsletter
18 – NBA Leadership Team Mtg., 9:00 AM
21 – Pastor's Lunch, Noon
Topic: Reaching Your Community
22 — Deadline to drop off items for Annual Project: Personal Care Gift Bags for Seasonal Farm Workers
25 – Memorial Day, NBA Office CLOSED

June

01 — Coffee & Conversation @ Riley's Southern Goods & Garden, 9-11 AM (Also June 8, 15, 29)
09-10 — SBC Annual Meeting, Orlando FL
15 — NBA Leadership Team Mtg., 9:00 AM
18 — Pastors' Lunch & Learn, Noon
21 — Happy Father's Day!

July

(There will not be a Pastors' Lunch & Learn this month.)

03 — Independence Day Holiday, NBA Office Closed
04 — Happy 4th of July!
15 — Items Due for AUGUST Newsletter
17 — Happy Birthday, Keith!
20 — NBA Leadership Team Mtg., 9:00 AM

UPDATED: *"My name is Jerry Corbett. My brother and I have inherited four plots at Wayne Memorial Park cemetery in the Goldsboro area. All four plots together make up Unit 209 in Section 4M of the cemetery.*
The office at Wayne Memorial Park says that each plot would sell for $5,000 today. ***I am hoping to get $1,000 each*** *and would be willing to sell them in sets of two each.*
If you or someone you know is in need of these funeral plots, please contact me at jerry.corbett@gmail.com."

Neuse Baptist Association
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