

**MIDDLE FLORIDA-GEORGIA
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH SCHOOL CONVENTION
GAINES COOPER SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
315 Sierra Road
Havana, Florida 32333**

ELDER GREGORY HOUSTON, PRESIDENT

ELDER DALE HARRISON, V. PRESIDENT

March 3, 2026

Dear Pastors,

Please find enclosed two (2) packets outlining criteria for eligibility to participate in the two scholarship programs offered by the Middle Florida-Georgia Church School Convention.

In Packet One (#1), you will find information for the 2026 High School Graduates who meet eligibility requirements for participation. Please be reminded that the deadline for submitting requested information to the committee is *Monday before the First Sunday in June (June 1, 2026)*. **There will be NO exceptions to the deadline.**

In Packet Two (#2), you will find information for College Students who meet eligibility requirements for participation. Please be reminded that the deadline for submitting the names and addresses of eligible participants to the committee is *June 1, 2026*. **There will be NO exceptions to the deadline.**

Pastors, we are counting on you to get this information to all eligible participants as soon as possible. Please encourage all participants to meet required deadlines.

If there are any questions, please contact the Scholarship Committee.

Sincerely,

Mother Lillie Pease, Chair (850) 591-4268

Elder Samuel Hayes, (850) 339-5090
Elder Cedric Spradley, (850) 528-4462
Elder Gregory Houston, President (850) 322-6548
Elder Dale Harrison, Vice President (850) 545-1605
Mother Cherry Alexander, (850) 591-8694
Mother Mary Watson, (850) 251-1979

NOTE: Pastors, please inform your High School Oratorical Contestants, that they will need to present their essay **Thursday, June 25, 2026 AT 3:00 PM.**

Packet #1 (High School Graduates)

**MIDDLE FLORIDA-GEORGIA
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH SCHOOL CONVENTION
GAINES-COOPER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
315 Sierra Road
Havana, Florida 32333**

ELDER GREGORY HOUSTON, PRESIDENT

ELDER DALE HARRISON, V. PRESIDENT

March 3, 2026

Dear Pastors,

Attached is a copy of the 2026 Middle Florida-Georgia Primitive Baptist, Gaines-Cooper Church School Scholarship Guidelines. Please be sure to share this information with all eligible members in your congregation. It is imperative that they understand that there are NO exceptions to the deadline and the material required for submission. The topic for the 2026 Oratorical Contest is **“God is Near”** and is based on the Scripture from **Psalms 145:17-19**. Should you or members of your congregation have questions, please feel free to contact any member of the Scholarship Committee. The names and phone numbers are listed below.

It is our hope that you would actively encourage participation in this program.

Sincerely,

Mother Lillie Pease, Chair (850) 591-4268

Cc: Elder Samuel Hayes, (850) 339-5090
Elder Cedric Spradley, (850) 528-4462
Elder Gregory Houston, President (850) 322-6548
Elder Dale Harrison, Vice President (850) 545-1605
Mother Cherry Alexander, (850) 591-8694
Mother Mary Watson, (850) 251-1979

Packet #1 – HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

THE MIDDLE FLORIDA-GEORGIA PRIMITIVE BAPTIST GAINES-COOPER CHURCH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the 1967 Session of the Church School Convention, President M.M. Gaines recommended the formation of a scholarship fund. The recommendation read, “I recommend that a scholarship fund be set up for the needy, deserving students in our church”. The recommendation resulted in a scholarship fund of \$225.00 being initiated by 1968 for students who would participate in the Oratorical Contest. First prize was \$100.00; second prize, \$75.00 and third prize, \$50.00. These fees would be given to students as they matriculate to college.

In 1968, President M.M. Gaines recommended that the Program and Divine Worship Committee select topics each year for the Oratorical Contest. The first recipient to receive the scholarship was Sister Marilyn Campbell. Her scholarship was \$100.00.

In 1984, the Middle Florida-Georgia Church School Convention Scholarship fund was revised. The scholarship committee during this time was Mother Ethel Thompson, Elder P.J. Hannah, and Elder F.R. Rush.

In the 99th Session of the Middle Florida-Georgia Church School Convention, President F.R. Rush recommended that the criteria be reviewed and revised for the purpose of adding specificity to the dates and evaluative criteria for the essay and presentation. The criteria were presented and approved during the 99th Session for implementation in the 100th Session of the Middle Florida-Georgia Church School Convention in 2000.

*(The detailed recommendation and prior criteria can be found in the minutes of the 99th Session.)

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

1. High school graduates with at least a 2.0 average or above, or received a General Education Diploma (GED)
2. Graduate must have satisfactory citizenship marks, which will be reflected in the final high school report card.
3. Participant must be in good standing with his/her local church school and recommended by the Superintendent and Pastor.
4. Must have attended last Convention and must enroll and attend the upcoming Convention.
5. Must have participated in a community service and/or volunteer activity. (i.e. assisting the elderly, cleaning church, reading to children, tutoring, volunteer at nursing home)
6. The applicant’s church must have enrolled with the scholarship program for two consecutive years.
7. Must develop and present a typed essay of at least 2000 words on the current year’s Church School theme.

Packet #1 – High School Graduates

REQUIREMENTS AND DUE DATES

Requirements	Due Date
Submit a copy of your high school diploma and final report card to committee chairperson.	Wednesday, June 24, 2026
Submit a copy of proof of enrollment or acceptance at an Institution of higher learning for a degree or terminal course to committee chairperson.	Wednesday, June 24, 2026
Submit three (3) hard copies on this year’s theme. The essay should be doubled spaced not to exceed ten (10) pages, and must be at least 2000 words, but no more than 3000. The essay should be written by the participant. It must be on the current theme for the convention. There are no exceptions. Essay must be submitted on or before the June 1, 2026. Essays received after the due date are <u>NOT</u> eligible.	Forward to: Mother Lillie Pease 315 Sierra Road Havana, Fl 32333 DEADLINE: Essay must be received on or before the June 1, 2026
Submit all information electronically to: themfgpba@gmail.com If unable to submit electronically, your mailed copies must be postmarked by June 1, 2026. NO EXCEPTIONS	Electronic copy must be received by June 1, 2026 NO EXCEPTIONS!
Submit a letter of recommendation from your Church’s Church School Superintendent and signed by the Pastor regarding attendance in church school.	Submit with essay packet to Mother Lillie Pease
Be available to meet with the Scholarship Committee. The purpose of this meeting is to familiarize you with the evaluation criteria for the presentation. It is also an opportunity for the committee to meet and learn more about you. Failure to meet with the committee at the designated time in addition to having submitted the required information, will result in the reduction of your overall score.	The time will be announced at the Opening Night Session On Tuesday Night
Present your essay to Convention. The essay presented must be the essay submitted. Any changes will result in a reduction of points.	Thursday, June 25, 2026 at 3pm.
The Chair of the committee will provide the President and Vice President a list of all participants before the presentations.	Opening Session on Tuesday night.

**MIDDLE FLORIDA-GEORGIA
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH SCHOOL CONVENTION
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

315 Sierra Road
Havana, Fl 32333

March 3, 2026

Dear Pastors:

We are attempting to provide scholarship money to our Church School College Youth who meet the criteria below. In order to determine what students may be eligible for the scholarship, we need your help. We are asking that you forward to us the **name, address and phone number** of students in your church who meet criteria 1 – 7. If the student is an active participant of the Youth Congress, please indicate next to student's name on the attached form. This information must be mailed to Mother Lillie Pease on or before, June 1, 2026 to be considered.

CRITERIA:

1. The applicant must be enrolled and submit proof of enrollment in a vocational school, community college, or university as a full-time student for Spring 2026. Must be classified as a sophomore, junior or senior or can show more than one year of full-time study at a vocational school.
2. The applicant must submit proof of continued and consistent study in a vocational school, community college or university.
3. The applicant must submit proof of at least a cumulative 2.0 or above overall grade point average.
4. The applicant must be a **regular** church school participant in his/her local church unless they are attending school out town. If in school out of town, verification of attendance before leaving must be indicated. Verification of attendance in church school is a must. The Pastor and Church School Superintendent must sign a statement verifying that the applicant attends or attended Church School **regularly**. A Verification form must be submitted for **each student**. A waiver form must be submitted for each applicant who is out of town for school.
5. The applicant must be a member of a Primitive Baptist Church of the Middle Florida-Georgia Association.
6. The applicant's church must have contributed the amount assessed by the Church School for Scholarship for at least 2 consecutive years.
7. If the applicant is an active member or officer of the Middle Florida-Georgia Youth Congress, please indicate on attached form.
8. The applicant must provide a short narrative of at least 200 words on a topic that will be provided to the applicant when eligibility has been determined. The narrative must be doubled spaced, one-inch margins, with 12 pitch fonts. The electronic copy must be sent to Mother Lillie Pease: themfgpba@gmail.com or if mailed, postmarked by June 1, 2026.

9. The applicant will be asked to attend at least one session of the upcoming Church School Convention to be held at **The Old West Enrichment Center, 2344 Lake Bradford Road, Tallahassee, FL 32310** and make yourself known to Mother Lillie Pease, Elder Sam Hayes or Elder Cedric Spradley unless a waiver form is submitted. Submit along with your 200-word narrative, the waiver form if you are out of town.

We will consider the information you submit and the application for your student is located on the MFGPBA website. mfgpba.org

A form is provided for you to submit by June 1, 2026. Please keep in mind that the **Verification of Church School Attendance Form** must be submitted along with the other forms. If we have not received your list of eligible students and a **Verification Form** for **each** student, postmarked on or before June 1, 2026, consideration **will not** be given for the 2026 Scholarship. Therefore, we suggest you review the criteria and if you have eligible students, please send this information **as soon as possible**. There will be **no** exceptions to the June 1, 2026 deadline.

Return the completed forms to:

Mother Lillie Pease
315 Sierra Road
Havana, Fl. 32333

themfpba@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Mother Lillie Pease, Chair (850) 591-4268

Cc: Elder Samuel Hayes, (850) 339-5090
Elder Cedric Spradley, (850) 528-4462
Elder Gregory Houston, President (850) 322-6548
Elder Dale Harrison, Vice President (850) 545-1605
Mother Cherry Alexander, (850) 591-8694
Mother Mary Watson, (850) 251-1979

Attachments:
Eligible Participant(s) Form
Verification Form
Waiver Form

Packet #2 – COLLEGE STUDENTS

**ELIGIBLE SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS FOR 2026
MIDDLE FLORIDA-GEORGIA GAINES-COOPER SCHOLARSHIP
FOR CONTINUED STUDY**

Name of Church _____

Pastor _____

Pastor's Phone (s) _____

I certify that the following student(s) meet the criteria for consideration of a scholarship for 2026 through the Middle Florida-Georgia Primitive Baptist Church School Convention.

Student's Name	Student's Address	Phone Number	Classification In School	Member Youth Congress	Verification/Waiver Form Attached
<i>Example: Houston, Gregory</i>	<i>1234 Main Street Tallahassee, 32308</i>	<i>850-366-1234</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>attached</i>

Submitted By: _____, **Pastor**

_____, **Superintendent**

Packet #2 – College Students

VERIFICATION FORM OF CHURCH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

This is to certify that I, _____, Pastor of

_____ Primitive Baptist Church; and I,

_____ Superintendent of said Church, attest that the

Applicant _____ is a member of this Church and

Attends/Attended Church School regularly before leaving for school.

Pastor's Signature

Date

Superintendent's Signature

Date

NOTE: This form must be completed for EACH applicant.

MIDDLE FLORIDA-GEORGIA
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH SCHOOL CONVENTION
GAINES-COOPER SCHOLARSHIP FOR CONTINUED STUDY
315 Sierra Road
Havana, Fl 32333

March 3, 2026

Dear Applicant:

CONGRATULATIONS! Your Pastor and Superintendent have determined you to be eligible to apply for the Gaines-Cooper Scholarship for Continued Study.

Please review and be sure that you comply and meet all criteria below.

CRITERIA:

1. You must be enrolled and can show proof of enrollment in a vocational school, community college or university as a full-time student for spring or summer of 2026. You must be classified as a sophomore, junior or senior or can show proof of more than one year of full-time study at a vocational school.
2. You must show proof of a cumulative 2.0 or above overall grade point average.
3. You must provide a short narrative of at least 200 words on the current year's theme: **"God is Near", Psalms 147: 17-19**. The narrative must be double spaced, one-inch margins, with 12 pitch fonts. Email to: themfgpba@gmail.com
4. You must attend at least one session of the 2026 Annual Session of the Church School Convention, which will be held at **The Old West Enrichment Center, 2344 Lake Bradford Road, Tallahassee, Fl 32310**. The scholarship stipend will be awarded to the applicant on Thursday, June 25, 2026 at 3:00 pm along with the Oratorical Contestants. Please make every effort to be present to receive the stipend and make yourself known to the Committee Chair unless a waiver has been received.

Enclosed is an Application for the Gaines-Cooper Scholarship for Continued Education. This application, along with your short narrative and/or waiver if needed, must be submitted to the program chairperson on or before Monday, June 1, 2026. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE DEADLINE**. Proof of enrollment and grade point average must also be submitted along with the application before the stipend is awarded.

Sincerely,

Mother Lillie Pease, Chair (850) 591-4268

Cc: Elder Samuel Hayes, (850) 339-5090
Elder Cedric Spradley, (850) 528-4462
Elder Gregory Houston, President (850) 322-6548
Elder Dale Harrison, Vice President (850) 545-1605
Mother Cherry Alexander, (850) 591-8694
Mother Mary Watson, (850) 251-1979

APPLICATION FOR THE
GAINES-COOPER SCHOLARSHIP
FOR CONTINUED EDUCATION

The application must be completely and accurately filled out by the applicant.

Name of applicant: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number {s} _____ Email _____

Church: _____ Primitive Baptist Church

Pastor: _____

Superintendent: _____

Church activities you are involved in: _____

Vocational/College/University Attending: _____

Classification: _____ Major Course of Study _____

Expected Date of Graduation: _____

Signature

Date

WAIVER FORM OF NON-ATTENDANCE

This is to certify that I, _____ as Pastor of
_____ Primitive Baptist Church; and I, _____
_____, as Superintendent of said Church, do verify that the applicant is
a member of said Church and is currently out of town attending school.

Pastor's Signature

Date

Superintendent's Signature

Date

Note: A form should be submitted for each out-of-town student.