



GARUNA MINISTRIES

A ministry of sharing the “grace, mercy and compassion” (Garuna) of Jesus in Thailand, Cambodia and surrounding countries.

GARUNA MINISTRIES | 11034 North 36th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85028 | www.garuna.org | info@garuna.org | Volume 24, Issue 3 | Christmas 2024

JESUS...NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, **and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**.” Isaiah 9: 6-7



When children are born, there is a good bit of conversation about what to name them. We borrow names we like. We use family member’s names. We pick names that embody qualities we hope will be a part of our children’s lives. The reason we spend so much time picking names for our children is because **a name speaks to character**. Jesus’ name was given by his heavenly Father. Isaiah 9 lists other names that describe his characteristics. In this newsletter, **we hope you will enjoy meeting some new friends from Garuna’s ministry in Asia**. We include **you** as an essential part of this work!

God Saves • Wonderful Counselor • Mighty God • Everlasting Father • Prince of Peace • Savior • Redeemer • Bread of Life • King of Kings • Beloved Son • Lord of Lords • Messiah • Creator • Alpha-Omega • Immanuel • Prophet • Priest

WHAT A CELEBRATION!

The Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church (TCLC) recently celebrated its 20th year by inviting neighboring country Lutheran leaders to join them in celebration and mission collaboration! Nearly 150 friends gathered from Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Korea, and Indonesia. Other ministry partners from the USA and Canada were present, as well.

This anniversary provided the chance to learn about each country’s unique ministries, challenges, and joys. The group traveled to 3 locations in Thailand-Bangkok, Phuket, and Chiang Mai – while enjoying the cultural nuances, foods, and beauty of each area. Rev. Dr. Tom Zelt provided meaningful keynote messages on the “Uncompromised Gospel” as he used his extensive archeological background to encourage the participants and to lead discussions on the challenges and opportunities in ministry today.



TCLC President, Rev. Dr. Ted NaThalang shared, “**We Lutherans are a small number in the world, especially in Asia, therefore, it is very important that we get to know each other so that we may have opportunities to partner and collaborate for His mission to seek and save the lost.** God has given each one of us unique gifts and talents, and when we put all those things together, great things can happen for the expansion of His kingdom.”

The Ehlers worked with Ted and Gunya NaThalang as LCMS missionaries in Thailand in the '90s, leading to the formation of Garuna (2001) and the Luther Institute-SE Asia (2006) after the Ehlers returned to the USA. Garuna’s purpose is to serve the local churches in the region.

Pastor Niran Temsakun, Garuna’s Luther Institute-Thailand director shared, “**It was a truly enriching experience, where I had the opportunity to learn from many people, make new friends from Southeast Asia, and be inspired by the various ministries.**” Pastor Bun Phanna serves as the Director of the Luther Institute-Cambodia. He shared, “**This was helpful because I was able to see that theological education (LISA) and Christian schools (Bible Teaching, Bible Study & Sunday Schools) are crucially important as we want to expand the Gospel and Lutheran churches in Southeast Asia.**”



Creator • Alpha-Omega • Immanuel • Prophet • Priest • Lamb of God • Good Shepherd • The Word • Rock • Bridegroom • Christ • Son of Man • God Saves • Wonderful Counselor • Mighty God • Savior • Redeemer •

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HELLO
my name is
Sreylin
Youth Camper

1ST "ANNUAL" YOUTH CAMP!

There were 110 Cambodian teens gathered at the 1st annual Cambodian Lutheran Church youth camp this fall. These young people gathered from throughout the country enjoying 3 days of Bible study, worship, games, fellowship and fun. Camper Sreylin, a Garuna Christian School graduate and now a teacher aide at GCS 7 shared, *"The youth camp helped me hear the Gospel and taught me about the Word of Jesus, which made me feel like I was getting something new for my life through the Word of God. I was so happy when I heard the Gospel of Jesus."* This camp was jointly funded by Garuna, LCMS World Mission, and the Lutheran Church-Canada.



HELLO
my name is
Somny
GCS Parent

IT'S RE-ENROLLMENT TIME AT THE GARUNA SCHOOLS

In Cambodia, it is time to register for the new school year. Garuna currently enrolls over 1700 students in 9 schools, but expects to be near 2000 with the opening of school #10 this month. Parents are excited to enroll their children. Somny shared, *"I am so happy that my daughter is admitted to study at Garuna Christian School #4. According to my observation, the Garuna teachers are taking good care of my daughter, in teaching her to gain more knowledge and a better attitude, keeping her safe, and reducing her leisure time. Regarding faith, I am open for her to choose. She already believes in the Lord Jesus Christ because of her time at the school."*



HELLO
my name is
Srey Leab
Garuna Team Athlete

THE VICTORY... ON AND OFF THE FIELD!

Garuna's boy and girl youth soccer teams combine sports with Bible study and fellowship. In a recent tournament the girls placed #1 and the boys #3. Most of the players graduated from Garuna Christian Schools and remain connected to the ministry, including Srey Leab who was talented enough to play for the Cambodia national team. She shared, *"Thanks to my Garuna coaches and Pastor Heng Kimhai (GCS principal) for guiding me to know God from a young age. God is so good to me!"*



HELLO
my name is
Veasna
Garuna-Special Projects Coordinator

GARUNA SCHOOL #10 OPENS!

The dedication for Garuna School #10 will be in January, attended by representatives from Desert Foothills Lutheran Church (Scottsdale, AZ). Mr Veasna oversees school construction for Garuna. He shared that Garuna schools are a big help to Cambodia by providing needed education, including a spiritual component which he sees as making a difference. *"I really enjoy working with Garuna because I can be a little part of bringing these benefits to Cambodian children and Cambodia as a whole, thanks to USA donors who join together to make a difference in our country."*





HELLO
my name is
Dara
GCS Principal

GARUNA'S INNOVATIVE LEADERS

Every fall, the 25 Garuna principals, vice principals, Bible teachers, and other key leaders join for some great planning and fellowship time. For a few hours, Jeff and Cheryl Ehlers join from Phoenix via Zoom for a devotion and update. Principal Dara shared, *"The leadership meeting makes us aware of the goals, objectives, and plans for the organization, so we can work to be strong and grow. At the meeting, we have the opportunity to learn new things, help each other, and to share good ideas to develop the workplace and ourselves."*



HELLO
my name is
Larry & Brian
Cousins

A FAMILY WORKS TOGETHER!

Garuna will build school #12 in the latter part of 2025, thanks to the Demmel family whose 8 siblings were part of St. John Lutheran Church & School in Madison, NE, starting in 1928. Garuna School #12 would be the first Garuna school/church funded by a group of mission-minded relatives in honor of the impact of their Lutheran heritage. Larry shared, *"This is a real testament to the faith-based principles that we were taught! The best part is that the pledges came from 3 different generations!"* Brian added, *"Praise the Lord! What a cool opportunity to change lives for all eternity."*

NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES



...JESUS!



HELLO
my name is
Chhorvy
GCS #2 Principal

THE GARUNA STRATEGY IN ACTION!

Mrs. Chhorvy (pictured in front) was hired to be a principal and general ed teacher at GCS #2. Though not a Christian, she wanted to learn about Jesus. Weekly faculty Bible studies led by the school's Bible teacher helped. She was then led to join the Garuna's Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) Bible classes to learn and understand more about the Christian faith and salvation in Jesus Christ. God has worked in her life, and she will be baptized at the next LISA class! She said, *"I believe in God. He has saved me from my sin. Baptism saves me. I'm very happy and blessed to work and serve with Garuna School by being with kids and sharing God's love for them. I used to face difficulty in my family life, but God prepared me for a better future to know him through Garuna. I give thanks to God!"*

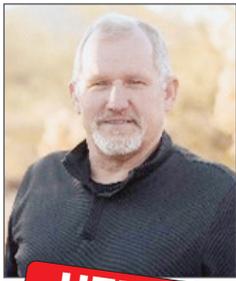


HELLO
my name is
Amaritapa
Director, GK-Thailand

THAILAND GARUNA KIDS DANCE WITH JOY!

Garuna Kids-Thailand creates opportunities for over 150 children in Chiang Mai government schools to learn and grow through a variety of enriching programs, including language, music, dance, and art. Garuna Kids-Thailand Director Amaritapa shares, *"By providing these experiences, our program introduces children to the love of God and Christ, fostering their spiritual growth. Additionally, we empower children to reach their full potential and develop essential life skills."*





Greetings to you in Jesus' NAME!

The theme of Garuna's Christmas newsletter is "Jesus, Name above all Names"! God specifically chose the name Jesus for His Son, the Savior of the world! **The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew name Joshua and means "God saves" or "The LORD is salvation"**. In the name God chose for His Son, we see His plan of bringing salvation to a world lost in sin and darkness.

That first Christmas God told Joseph to name the child "Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21) His name was precisely chosen to describe His ministry.

Jesus has saved us from sin and death. He has given us a new and abundant life in Him. His name IS above all other names. **The amazing truth is that He even knows OUR names!** "But now, this is what the

Lord says – He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Israel: 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; **I have summoned you by name; you are mine**.'" (Isaiah 43:1)

Jesus has saved us by His death and resurrection not so that we could sit on the sidelines of life, but so that we would joyfully serve Him. There are many names out in the world that profess some type of religious importance but there is only One who can actually save us. "Salvation is found in no one else, **for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.**" (Acts 4:12)

Thank you for joining Garuna as we joyfully share the saving name of Jesus.

In His wonderful name,

Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers
Chairman



"I believe the long-game approach you're taking in Asia is one of the most strategic and practical eternal life change ministries I've experienced for global missions...due to the vision, strategy, and implementation of Garuna."



"...Just a note to tell you how impressed we were with the note, drawing and folder regarding our sponsored child, Sie Nuona. So impressive and so personal. We also appreciate the reminder to keep our Garuna Kid and family in prayer, along with Garuna Ministries."



GENEROSITY OPTIONS FOR (your name here):

Thanks for sending your gifts to fund Garuna ministry projects in SE Asia

Where Needed Most: Any amount is greatly appreciated!

Garuna Ministry Sponsorship Options:

- Garuna Kids (K-grade 6): \$30/month
- Bible/LISA Student (adult): \$50/month
- Garuna Teacher: \$100/month

Have you considered these giving options?

- **IRA Charitable Rollovers or IRA RMD's** can provide an opportunity for stewards over the age of 70½ to make gifts to Garuna from their IRAs directly with no income taxes due on the rolled over or donated funds.
- **Gifts of Appreciated Stock:** We can help you with this!
- **Donor Advised Funds:** Garuna welcomes gifts from your donor advised funds.
- **Employee Match:** Ask your employer if this option exists for you!

- **Estate Planning:** Have you considered Garuna in your estate planning?
- **Endowment Fund Gift:** Help us plan for the future!
- **Thrivent Choice:** Garuna is eligible to receive Thrivent Choice Dollars.

If you are led to donate, your check may be made **payable to Garuna**. Gifts may be mailed to **Garuna at 11034 North 36th Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85028**. You may also donate online by visiting our secure online giving page at www.garuna.org. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowable by law. The Garuna Foundation is a 501-c-3 nonprofit (EIN number: 86-1037570). Garuna will mail a gift receipt to the address you provide.

For more information on making gifts, please call (602) 765-7613 or email us at jeff@garuna.org.

