



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 25, Issue 3 | Christmas 2025

"...We wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ..." *Titus 2:13*



WORTH THE WAIT!



It is amazing to see how God has brought so many gifts to the Garuna Ministries over the past 24 years. In many ways, time has flown. But in other ways, we often find ourselves waiting... for results, for clarity, for permits, for leaders, for approvals, for God's will.

It's been WORTH THE WAIT as we see how God has been at work to ensure that His people around the world are being impacted by His Christmas coming and by the blessed hope of His return!



2,400 children receive a great K-6 Christian education in a safe and nurturing environment. Here, they escape some of the common threats in their lives... child trafficking, drugs, absent parents, and more. They are taught to be leaders. But the best thing is that **they hear about Jesus** for the first time! **WORTH THE WAIT!**



Garuna provides jobs for 85 local staff with a fair wage, benefits, and a retirement savings plan. Staff are also provided with an education, and all are in weekly Bible studies. **WORTH THE WAIT!**



Construction on Garuna Christian School #12 is underway after Garuna's Cambodian attorney receives the final land titles from the owners. **It takes time to obtain permissions, legal documents, and government licenses to do ministry in the most secure and stable manner. WORTH THE WAIT!**

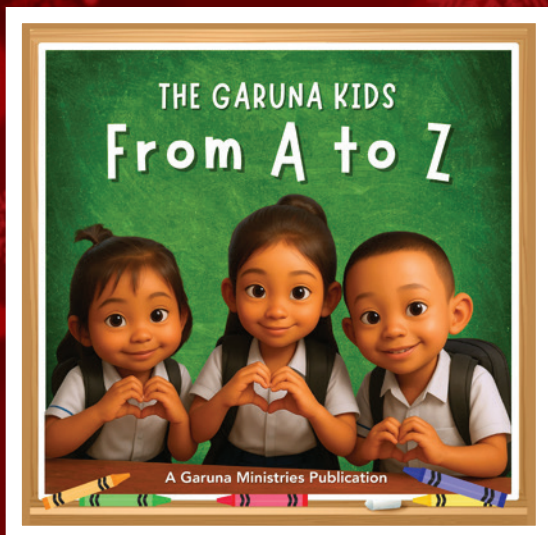


Parents and villagers are happy to have Garuna Schools and Sunday Schools in their local communities as their children are well educated, receive love, and are kept safe. Another benefit is that the children go home to share Jesus with their families! **WORTH THE WAIT!**



A formalized adult LISA Bible curriculum has been developed for the laity, teachers, deaconesses, and pastors. It is being revised with local input. Most classes are now taught by the indigenous leaders. **WORTH THE WAIT!**





WAITING FOR: THE AMAZON TRUCK DELIVERY

Garuna has now published a book available on Amazon, and it tells the story of the Garuna Kids and Schools Ministry in Cambodia. It's a fun and colorful resource for "children" of all ages. Future book and material projects are in development, so watch for exciting new materials in the months ahead...it will be worth the wait!



WAITING FOR: THE OPPORTUNITY FOR TRAINING & EDUCATION

Garuna is happy to hire great local workers to staff ministries in Thailand and Cambodia. Along with their employment, there is the opportunity to receive local pedagogical training, as well as bachelor's and master's degrees in their own countries. These opportunities allow the leaders to study online or on the weekends, so they do not have to leave their jobs or homes for extended periods of time. Even more important is the opportunity to study in Garuna's LISA (Bible training) program and the weekly faculty Bible studies at each school!



WAITING FOR: THE 2025 CHRISTMAS PARTIES!

For many years, Garuna has funded Christmas outreach events in Cambodia and Thailand, reaching thousands of students, families, and community members each year. The events all include the sharing of the Gospel with involvement from the students. Each site plans and prepares their own unique program with the budget provided. Last year's Christmas activities included the baptism of over 100 persons.



WAITING FOR: THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A TEACHER AIDE

Garuna Christian School (GCS) 6th grade graduates have an opportunity to be chosen to serve as a teacher aide at their alma mater! They serve as school aides, Sunday School helpers, and attend Bible study each week while attending secondary school at the government school. For \$60 per student, Garuna provides necessary uniforms and supplies for their yearlong enrollment. There are currently 169 serving as aides, with more added each year. When asked, this group of 14 aides at GCS #2 shared their desire to one day be a doctor (2), policeman/woman (2), lawyer (1) and the rest want to be teachers – hopefully at Garuna Christian Schools! Well worth the wait!



WAITING FOR: THE REVISED ADULT BIBLE CURRICULUM (LISA)

Garuna was founded in 2001 to assist the young Lutheran churches in Asia with outreach and training. The Luther Institute-SE Asia (LISA) was created to provide a curriculum of 20 courses for lay leaders, teachers, deaconesses, and pastors. The courses are now being revised and standardized for use around the world, led by Garuna's LISA Director Rev. Dr. Tom Zelt, Rev. Dr. Todd Jones, and Garuna's founder, Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers, with input from the local Asian teachers. Bun Phanna, Cambodia's LISA director shared, "We feel very positive about these modules and courses as they will be effective tools to help the leaders to be equipped with sound theology and biblical principles. **This updated LISA curriculum is the best among all that I have experienced.**"



WAITING FOR: MORE CLASSROOMS TO BE BUILT

We received a note from principals at the two newest Garuna Christian Schools (GCS) which were opened in 2025. "We don't have enough space for all the students who want to enroll at our school." Generous USA donors responded with little delay. **And today, there are 2-classroom additions being built at schools #10 and #11 for the many students who are ready and waiting to hear the Good News!** GCS #12 is also under construction and will be dedicated in January 2026! Come one, come all!



WAITING FOR: A NEW DRAWING FROM YOUR SPONSORED CHILD

Garuna's child sponsorship program is unique in that the students draw and color pictures each year for their sponsors. Almost 2,400 Garuna Kids have been busy as a new school year begins preparing this special "gift" to include as welcome and renewal packets go out to hundreds of sponsors. Wait no longer...if you'd like to be a sponsor, go to the Garuna website!



WAITING FOR: A CHANCE TO SERVE THE LORD!

Srey Mao, a Garuna Bible teacher writes, "It has been four years since I started working at Garuna Christian School #7 in Phnom Penh. I am truly thankful to God and to all the school leaders and teachers who have continuously encouraged me and provided me with many work opportunities, as well as the chance Garuna provided to pursue my university studies, which I am currently undertaking. **I will continue to do my best so that this work can keep growing and improving step by step.**"



FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

Christmas blessings to you in Jesus' name!

I'm sure one of your favorite things to do in life is to wait – right? Waiting is challenging. Being patient is difficult. It seems our world speeds up more

each year; and yet it gets harder to stay on top of all that we need and want to do. At the same time, though, **God often uses the times when we are forced to wait and exercise perseverance as the opportunity for Him to teach us to live by faith.** Per this Christmas newsletter theme, it is certainly worth the wait!

In Galatians 4:4, Paul lets us know that God's timing is perfect. He writes: **"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a**

woman, born under the law..." God does have a plan for us, enabling us to exercise patience and trust. He has been with us, and He will continue to be with us. He is the Immanuel of God, the Savior of the world.

We also are encouraged to exercise faith, trust, and patience as we wait for His promised return. In Titus 2:13, Paul reminds us to look forward in faith: **"...while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ..."**

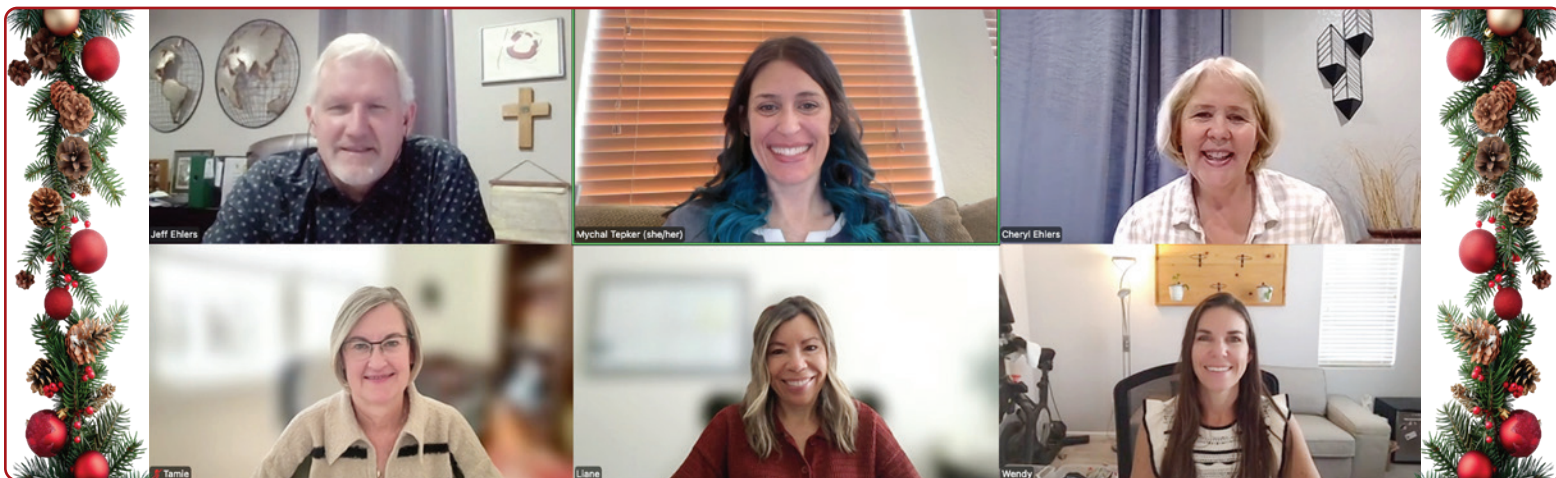
The Christmas message of salvation and the promise of eternal life is the message Garuna's team shares daily. Thank you for helping make this possible. **This Good News is having an impact on so many.**

Christmas blessings to you and yours in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers
Chairman – Garuna Ministries



The Garuna USA team can't WAIT to wish you a Merry Christmas! Garuna has an amazing team in both Asia and in the USA. Jeff and Cheryl Ehlers are blessed to work with four very talented part-time employees who keep very busy advancing God's work throughout the world! **Because of your generous partnership, they assist the 80 members of our local Thai and Cambodian teams to share the Good News of Jesus with thousands who are waiting to hear the Christmas story!**



Meet the Garuna team: (top row L to R): Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers (Founder, Chairman), Mychal Tepker (Data/CRM), Cheryl Ehlers (Dir. of Educational Ministries) (bottom row L to R): Tamie Worthington (Sponsorship Programs), Liane Henkell (Content Developer), Wendy Welfelt (Accountant)

GENEROSITY OPTIONS DON'T WAIT TO MAKE AN IMPACT!

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

- **"Where Needed Most" gifts**
- **Sponsoring Garuna Kids, teachers, LISA Bible students**
- **Want a Funding Project?** Send us a note!
- **IRA Charitable Rollovers or IRA RMD's** can provide an opportunity for stewards over the age of 70-1/2 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** – Helps 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. Thank you in advance for your partnership in prayer and financial support.



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

