



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 22, Issue 3 | Christmas 2022

GARUNA’S LATEST ADVENTURES

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” Luke 2:15b



ADVENT: ad-vent /'ad,vent/ *noun* the arrival of a notable person (**Jesus**) thing (**Salvation**), or event (**Christmas**). *Similar:* Arrival, appearance, coming, emergence, materialization, surfacing, occurrence.

ADVENTURE: ad-vent-ure /'ad,vent (t)SHər/, *noun* an unusual and exciting experience or activity. *Similar:* experience, incident, escapade, deed, opportunity.

Garuna’s ministry in Southeast Asia continues to be an **exciting and blessed adventure!** It is especially so during this **season of Advent** which presents so many open doors for sharing the message of Jesus’ coming in countries where few have heard this exciting news, nor have enjoyed the **adventure of living as a follower of Jesus.** Join us in reading about the amazing opportunities God is blessing in Southeast Asia!

ADVENTURES IN NORTHERN THAILAND: “Go, Tell It On The Mountain, Over The Hills And Everywhere!”

The most recent Garuna journey provided an opportunity to visit northern Thailand exploring opportunities to expand current work with the hilltribe people groups on the borders. There is great interest in Garuna’s Luther Institute – Southeast Asia (LISA) Bible training program which is very capably led by Pastor Niran who leads the LISA – Thailand program. **There is great receptivity as the Good News spreads outward from northern Thailand because LISA students have freedom to share with friends and families in more restricted areas.** Our Thai partners confirmed that LISA courses are much needed and loved!



ADVENTURES WITH HMONG COMMUNITIES: “Joy To The World, The Lord Is Come!”



Pastor Niran visits with some of his pastoral colleagues and Bible students in a Hmong village. He leads the teaching and mentoring of pastors and LISA students from his base in Chiang Mai, Thailand by visiting their villages, leading regional LISA workshops, and even by phone/ computer training which is now more available in remote areas of Thailand. **It was an amazing time to visit about ways in which Garuna can support the expansion of LISA training as these Thailand Concordia Lutheran Churches (TCLC) are seeing growth and much interest in the Gospel.**





O COME LET US ADORE HIM!
The students prepare Christmas songs and dances for their families and village community.



INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY, FOR HIS BED A CATTLE STALL
The Garuna Kids participate in a re-enactment of the Nativity story for their Christmas outreach events.



BE NEAR ME LORD JESUS, I ASK THEE TO STAY CLOSE BY ME FOREVER
The Garuna students are sincere in their prayers and in their child-like faith as they now understand the Christmas story which most had never heard before coming to the Garuna Christian Schools.



HOW GREAT OUR JOY! JOY...JOY...JOY!
Often, the schools plan a Christmas dance with the students in their beautiful Khmer costumes, exhibiting style and grace as they share the good news and their great joy!



O TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY...
 The teachers, principal and pastor share the Christmas message in word and song, often dressed in traditional Khmer dress.



DECK THE HALLS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY
 Every Garuna school plans their own Christmas party and decorations with their budgeted party funds, incorporating aspects of their own Asian culture and western traditions! In every case, they are creative, colorful, and usually include balloons!



LOVE AND JOY COME TO YOU...AND TO ALL YOUR FAMILY TOO!
 Many of the schools plan a family meal as part of their celebration, usually including rice, noodles, and soup prepared on an "open fire" minus the chestnuts!



SING, CHOIRS OF ANGELS, SING IN EXULTATION
 Whether the parties are held in the multi-purpose classrooms or outside on the school grounds, it is a special day when the Garuna Kids share the Christmas story, which they now understand.





From the Chairman

Dear Friends in Christ,

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the

baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Luke 2:15-17

Advent greetings to you in the name of Jesus, Savior of the World!

Cheryl and I have just returned from **Garuna's latest ADVENTure** which was a wonderful visit with our ministry teams in Cambodia and Thailand. I am always so humbled and motivated by their faith and dedication as they serve Jesus in some challenging circumstances.

The section from the Christmas text in Luke 2 reminded me of our trip. When the shepherds were told about the baby Jesus, they reacted by

hurriedly going to see what the angels had said. Finding the Baby Jesus, they quickly began to share this news with others whose reactions were ones of amazement. **Even after 2000+ years, our Asia ministry teams' reactions mirror those of the shepherds.** Once they learn of the message of Jesus' forgiveness, love, and gift of eternal life, they respond by sharing this Good News with others.

When I visit the Garuna ministry sites – schools, LISA, churches – **I am amazed at the open doors for the Gospel and for the receptivity of those who hear the message.** For many it is the first time to hear about Jesus. It's a joy to see a growing number of people who respond in faith, thanking, praising, and following God. It is a true privilege to see God at work.

I also thank God for you, our partners in an **ADVENTure**-filled ministry. Thank you so much for your faithful prayers and support to help bring this life-changing Christmas message to this part of God's world.

Sincerely in Christ,
Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers, Chairman
Garuna Ministries



★ Christmas Generosity Options: Bearing Gifts We Traverse Afar ★

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

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY!

Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) Center in Cambodia Goal: \$400,000 by December 31, 2022



There is still time to participate if God places this on your heart. This new facility will be used for Bible training, a new church plant, ministry offices, studio, translation office, teacher training, and for community outreach.

Where Needed Most – Any amount is greatly appreciated!

Garuna Ministry Sponsorship Options

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

Have you considered these ways to support Garuna Ministries?

- **IRA Charitable Rollovers or IRA RMD's** can provide an opportunity for stewards over the age of 72 to make gifts to Garuna from their IRAs directly with no income taxes due on the rolled over or donated funds.

- **Employee Match** – Ask your employer if this option exists for you!
- **Gifts of Stock** – Garuna can receive gifts of appreciated stock.
- **Estate Planning** – Have you considered leaving a legacy gift for Garuna as a part of your estate planning?
- **Endowment Fund Gift** – Helps us plan for the future!
- **Thrivent Choice** – Garuna partners with Thrivent Financial and is eligible to receive Thrivent Choice Dollars.
- **Amazon Smile** – Please consider Garuna as your charity of choice as you do your online **Christmas Shopping!** (smile.amazon.com)



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's NEW Address:
11034 North 36th Street • Phoenix, Arizona 85028

