



# 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](http://www.garuna.org) | [info@garuna.org](mailto:info@garuna.org) | Volume 23, Issue 1 | Easter 2023

## EASTER'S RENEWAL

### A New Heaven and a New Earth

"Then I saw a **new** heaven and a **new** earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the **new** Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, '**I am making everything new!**' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' (Rev. 21: 1-5)

### NEW LUTHER INSTITUTE-CAMBODIA DEDICATED!

In early January, Garuna's **new** Luther Institute-Cambodia Building was dedicated to the glory of God and for the future training of many indigenous Lutheran church and school leaders in Cambodia. **Thanks to many friends and congregations in the USA, the \$400,000 campaign goal was met and exceeded last fall!** These generous gifts paid for the **new** building, furnishings, and related Bible training expenses. It was an exciting day in Phnom Penh, Cambodia!



Approximately 40 Cambodian Bible students gathered to celebrate with friends from Thailand, Indonesia, and the USA!



The **new** Luther Institute-Cambodia center has large and small rooms for Bible and outreach classes, translation office and recording studio, resource library, reception area, kitchen, and even dorm space for interns.



Pastor Niran (left), director of Garuna's Luther Institute - Thailand shared greetings with his Cambodian counterpart (Pastor Peter), presenting the gift of a lighted clock for the **new** center, as a reminder to share the light and love of Christ with the people of Cambodia.



## NEW MASTER'S DEGREE COMPLETION!

In a unique partnership between the College of Theology at Grand Canyon University (GCU) and Garuna Ministries, **the M.A. in Christian Ministry degree was awarded on January 8 to six graduates.** These Lutheran leaders are from Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua, New Guinea, and the class mentor is from the USA. After 2 years of study, a special service and commencement celebration was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia for the graduates who could attend. Special thanks to GCU and the Lutheran professors who taught the classes. **There are plans to continue this partnership to further prepare leaders for Lutheran churchwork throughout the world!**



(L to R) Graduate Pastor Bun Phanna (Garuna's Cambodia Education Director), Rev. Sopha Khorn (Lutheran Heritage Foundation), Sophia Radjagukguk (Women's Ministry-Indonesia Lutheran Church) and Rev. Un Songim (Lutheran Hour Ministries).

## NEW SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS!

Approximately **1,300 students** are currently registered for the **new** academic year at the 7 Garuna Christian Schools in Cambodia. These students are registered for grades K-6. **They have the opportunity to learn about Jesus every day and are hearing about the Resurrection and promise of eternal life, as well!**



## NEW TWO SCHOOLS UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

The work continues on the construction of Garuna Christian Schools #8 and #9. **These schools should be completed by early fall, with dedications scheduled for January 2024.** These dedications will be attended by members/leaders of sponsoring churches in Fremont, CA, and an Omaha area coalition of 9 churches and the Concordia Schools of Omaha.



## NEW RIBBON CUTTING EVENTS!

Garuna Christian School #7 in Phnom Penh was dedicated in early January. **The village chief cut the ribbon and encouraged his mostly Buddhist community to send their children to the school.** He said his 4 grandchildren attend and are enjoying the teaching, love, and care they receive from the faculty there. A few days later, another Garuna School classroom was dedicated in Siem Reap. This school is operated by Garuna, but funded by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and School in Fremont, CA. The original school was dedicated in 2019, but an additional classroom was added this past year to accommodate additional students. Enrollment here totals over 320.



Students and parents gathered for the ribbon cutting at Garuna Christian School #7 in Phnom Penh.



Dr. Soni Jeske cuts the ribbon for the **new** addition at Garuna Christian School #6 in Siem Reap. She represents her home church in Fremont, CA.



# NEW VBS & SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR YOU!

Want to add a missional twist to your VBS, camps, children's ministry, or Sunday School programs? **The Garuna Kids would like to be part of your summer activities!** Contact Garuna to receive creative materials for your VBS centers or openings, SS classrooms, summer church children's messages, or other programming. **These materials include object lessons, projects, and leader guides which help teach your children and families about Garuna missions in SE Asia.** These materials are also designed to be used in conjunction with CPH or Group Publishing VBS materials! For free resources, contact us at [info@garuna.org](mailto:info@garuna.org).



# NEW VISION FOR THAILAND!

Plans are being developed for a **new** Luther Institute-Thailand building in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Watch for the details in the next newsletter. **The goal is to use this center for expanding Bible training from this new hub!** Garuna's Thailand leadership team visited the Cambodian team and students to bring greetings and to share in the church history class in January. The class included the history of the Thai and Cambodian churches. **Both country's leaders emphasized the importance of indigenous leadership training and ministry as the most effective means for sustainable growth.**



# NEW PROGRAMS FOR NORTHERN THAILAND

Garuna reaches out to children in Chiang Mai, Thailand through activities in the government schools. It's a blessing to be invited to come on campus to teach English and music classes that include Bible lessons. **There are also plans to develop Garuna Kids Bible Clubs and adult Bible training for hilltribe communities along the borders of Thailand.**



# NEW TRANSPORTATION!

**"Can my village children come to study at the Garuna Christian School?"** This request came to Garuna from Deaconess Hem Horn who has been studying in Garuna's Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) Bible program for a number of years. Children from her Sunday School wanted the opportunity to join the Garuna Kids in Garuna's school in Kampot, Cambodia. The problem: They live too far away to ride bikes or walk, but they really want to come to school and learn about Jesus. Solution: **A "school bus" and driver were hired and as many as 30 new students now travel daily to hear about Jesus!** What a wonderful journey! In addition, the bus driver wants to join Garuna's LISA Bible training classes in the new year!



*He is Risen indeed*





## From the Chairman: Making Everything **NEW!**

*“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’”*  
Rev. 21:4-5

**Dear Friends in Christ,**

He is risen. He is risen, indeed. Amen!

I need **renewal**. All humanity needs **renewal**. God’s Word is clear that without Jesus we remain in our sin, and we are without hope in this world. But thanks be to God, since He provides exactly what we need.

Easter is all about **renewal**. It is about something incredibly **new**. It is about something that has never happened before. It is about Jesus’

rising from the dead and His victory over the grave. His resurrection makes everything **new**. Instead of having a debilitating fear of death, His gift of eternal life replaces that fear with a certain hope.

His gift is eternal life in a place that is hard to describe because of its beauty and holiness. There, with God in paradise, we will have no more suffering, pain, hardship, or death. This is the ultimate **renewal**. We look forward to this promise fulfilled as it gives us joy for daily life. It gives us purpose for daily service and sacrifice for His glory and for the sharing of this message of **renewal**.

Thank you for your partnership with Garuna in our ministry of proclaiming **Easter’s renewal** where so few have heard.

In the name of our living Savior,  
**Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers, Chairman  
Garuna Ministries**

*These LISA Bible students wear Christmas ornaments on their shirts which say “Faith” and “Hope.” The Christmas and Easter messages of salvation and eternal life are **new** to most people in Southeast Asia.*



# Generosity Options

**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!



*Garuna Kids meet their Garuna Kid sponsor who was visiting from California!*

- **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 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](http://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. Contact us at [info@garuna.org](mailto:info@garuna.org) if you have any additional questions.

