



# THE GARUNA FOUNDATION

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

THE GARUNA FOUNDATION | 2924 East Cholla Street, Phoenix, AZ 85028 | www.garuna.org | info@garuna.org | Volume 20, Issue 1 | Easter 2020

### From the Chairman:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Romans 15:13 (NIV)*

### Dear Friends in Christ:

The Easter worship services will be different this year, but the meaning and impact of Easter will likely feel greater to us than ever before.



*Garuna leaders spend time in prayer. Please keep them in your prayers, too.*

The coronavirus pandemic pushes us to our knees. What can we do? How can we help? It is a time for us to pray. And, our prayers are offered in the LIGHT of Easter.

What is it about the events of Easter that can bring hope and peace to people in all corners of the world? The recognition and celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead is essential to our faith. Jesus overcame sin, the enemy, and death for us. The resurrection seals that victory over these enemies for you, me, and all

believers. Our hope comes from His promise of eternal life and His daily presence with us. Peace in all circumstances comes from His promise that He restored our relationship with God and that He forgives us.

As our verse from Romans states, the Holy Spirit works trust (faith) in our hearts because Jesus did for us what we cannot do for ourselves. In spite of terrible situations, this trust in Christ fills our hearts with peace and hope. Easter reminds us that it is Jesus who loves us, who cares for us, and who saves us.

So, you are in our prayers. Thank you for your partnership with Garuna to bring this message to so many. May the meaning of Easter so fill our hearts that we might be overflowing with that love and concern for others. At this season of Easter, in the year 2020, perhaps the best way to celebrate this great hope is to pray for one another – and that includes our brothers and sisters in Christ from all around the world, especially your Garuna friends in Asia.

Sincerely in Jesus our Savior,

**Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers, Chairman  
The Garuna Foundation**

Pray  
for

The English Teaching Ministry in Thailand.



*The events of Easter bring us all hope, joy, and eternal life. Please pray for the English students in Thailand, many of whom are hearing the Easter message for the first time.*



*Students of all ages study at the Into Light Lutheran Church's English Center in Bangkok. They learn Bible stories as part of their English lessons.*

HE IS  
risen



## Pray for

The Ministry of the Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA)

# Indigenous Leadership Training

Garuna's number one objective is to train indigenous leaders so that they may be equipped by God to share His Word and lead the new churches in their own countries. The way that is done differs by country and circumstances. In some areas, students gather for 1-week intensives and then go back to their homes and ministries to use what they've learned. In other cases, the students meet weekly. In some locations, students may need to travel to a region in which they may study more freely. And even more practically, the teachers are beginning to use online resources to share with students via YouTube, Facebook, or other means. Thailand, especially, makes use of the internet to stream teaching for others to use. This is an area of new development and opportunity as Garuna plans for the future. The class gatherings have been temporarily suspended during this time of quarantine but LISA continues to offer online teaching and encouragement. Please pray for the health of our LISA students and for their ability to share the Good News with their people during this time.



Pastor Sompong teaches a weekly class for local students in Bangkok, while live streaming it for those who live farther away.

## Pray for

The LISA Teachers and Bible Students in Southeast Asia.

# Meet Pastor Niran

Pastor Niran Temsakun is a pastor and leader in the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church (TCLC) and serves as the Country Coordinator for the Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) in Thailand. After completing the 4-year program LISA program himself, he now works closely with his wife, Esther, to train and mentor the other young leaders from northern Thailand. He has a heart for new church plants and currently oversees 3 churches and 5 preaching stations in this part of the country.

Pastor Niran grew up as a Buddhist and served as a monk at a temple in Chiang Mai. At age 17, his sister shared the Gospel with him. He was surprised to learn that Jesus could forgive him of his sins. Until that time, he had been taught that reincarnation gives you multiple opportunities to reach perfection. He had never heard the Bible's message of forgiveness before that day.

An excellent mentor and guide for his LISA students, Niran loves to give them opportunities to practice and apply what they've been studying. In addition to the local ministries, he and his assistants travel to more remote borders of the country to meet and train students from bordering regions who have travel freedom. This model extends the ministry into multiple countries in this part of the world. The students can then they take what they've learned and apply it immediately to their ministries.

Pastor Niran shared, "I've learned about Lutheran doctrine and how to serve and teach my students through LISA and the good professors who teach us. I'm so blessed by Garuna's support. It's not just about a salary, but I have been encouraged to pray and to develop my ministry through the LISA program. I like the way that Garuna helps and supports this goal of church planting."



Pastor Niran Temsakun and his wife, Esther, live in Chiang Mai, Thailand, but also travel throughout northern Thailand to train Lutheran leaders and to support new TCLC church plants.

## Cambodia Lutheran Church Forms

Garuna exists to help and encourage the planting of churches, including national Lutheran Church bodies. It was a great joy to see the local church leaders gather on January 31 and February 1 of 2020 to sign the constituting documents for a national Cambodian Lutheran Church (CLC). There were approximately 37 who gathered from all over the country, representing 16 churches, 29 preaching stations, 1698 church members (children, youth, and adults). This is a huge step in the life of this very young church body and a great reason to rejoice!



Cambodian church leaders gather to form a national Lutheran Church body. It was a great time of fellowship, prayer, planning, and optimism as they reach a long-term goal.

## Pray for

The Indigenous Lutheran Churches



Pray  
for

The  
Youth  
in Asia

# Soccer Ministry

There are many ways to plant a church. In doing so, it's important to be relevant and to meet the interests and needs of those in the community. In Cambodia, the young people especially enjoy soccer. The youth in Kampong Chhnang are coming together with the Garuna Christian School and church leaders to gather around sports, Bible study, and worship. Through soccer, an interesting global partnership has developed. A former Christ Lutheran School student from Phoenix now plays major league soccer for Atlanta United. He and his franchise are excited to help support the young people in Cambodia by providing some of the needed soccer supplies. How great is that?



The youth group soccer team is learning to serve by connecting with the local Garuna Christian School, lending muscle and helping with the upkeep.

## TRUST IN THE LORD...

is the message shared at each Garuna Christian School. Garuna teacher, Mr. Bunthen, heard this message shared during a class Bible lesson. After some time, he asked to be baptized. This will be his first Easter as a baptized Christian. The Prov. 3: 5-6 "Trust" shirt was recently given as an encouragement to each of the 45 Garuna team members. The crosses on either side of the word "trust" remind us of the Easter promise in which Jesus died for "us" as we stand between the cross of Good Friday until the day when we reach heaven.



Pray  
for

The Garuna  
Christian  
Schools and  
the Garuna  
Teachers

## Garuna Christian Schools Postpone Classes

Following the Cambodian government public health mandates, the Garuna Christian School students and teachers now must remain at home during the coronavirus pandemic. Initially, students were quarantined and the teachers spent time at the schools to do some cleaning, upkeep, planning, and Bible study. Now, they are following the Cambodian government's quarantine, remaining at home until further notice. They are trying to maintain healthy lifestyles – both physically and spiritually. We thank God for the amazing Garuna team and please join us in praying for their safety!



The teachers at the Garuna Christian School in Kampot spend time in prayer, maintaining appropriate "social distance." Isn't it great to know that God is always with near us?

Male teachers are working together to do some campus beautification activities.



Pray  
for

The  
Garuna  
Kids and  
their  
Families!

# The Garuna Kids!



## Your Most Valuable "Gift" to the Garuna Ministry

During this Easter season, please know that we appreciate you. We ask that you continue to keep Garuna and our friends in Southeast Asia in your daily prayers as a way to give *"where needed most"*.

### GENERAL:

- Health and safety for health care workers and first responders
- Our leaders as they need to make critical decisions.
- Opportunities to share the Easter message with those who are in fear and pain.

### LISA (Luther Institute Southeast Asia):

- New and creative ways to expand our Bible training delivery.
- The work being done on the standardization of the LISA curriculum.
- The hiring of additional staff to help expand the LISA program.

### CHURCH PLANTING:

- The starting of new small groups, worship groups, and the new Cambodia Lutheran Church.
- The strong and growing faith of our teens who will become the next generation of leaders in Asia.
- Special Easter celebrations in the hearts and lives of all people, despite the quarantines which restrict group gatherings.

### OUTREACH:

- The ministry of the English Center in Bangkok so that they would be able to keep in touch with their students and that God would create faith in their hearts.
- Creative ways to reach seekers through sports, music, service projects, English teaching, schools, camps, etc.

### GARUNA CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS:

- Safety, good health, and growing faith for the 1028 Garuna students and their families.
- The building of school number 7 – that it will continue to be built with safety and high standards.
- The 45 staff members in Cambodia – for good health for them and their families.

Garuna thanks YOU for being so helpful to the ministry in SE Asia. May God bless you for your very generous and helpful gifts of love, prayer, and donations!



*Joy is evident in the faces of the Garuna Kids and Deaconess Neak Mao as they play during a break time. May the hope of the Easter promise give you joy as you daily celebrate God's promises of forgiveness, peace, and eternal life.*

Pray  
for  
The  
Garuna  
Ministry

