



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 19, Issue 3 | December 2019

From the Chairman:

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:21 (NIV)



Dear Friends in Christ:

Blessed Christmas greetings to you in the powerful and saving name of Jesus our Savior. "Joy to the world, the LORD has come!"

The Advent and Christmas seasons are times full of joy, thankfulness, and celebration. These feelings of peace and happiness come from that which we celebrate – the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Matthew records the reason for our joy as he writes: "...because He will save His people from their sins." I cannot imagine a statement that has more meaning. We do need saving from our enemies of sin and death. And, it is the forgiveness of sins that Jesus earned for us by His death and resurrection that brings this grace (garuna) to us. This forgiveness brings with it the gift of eternal life as well as purpose and meaning for this present life. The celebration of the birth of our Savior fills our hearts and homes with great joy and peace.



Leaders from various hill-tribe congregations in Thailand lead worship at TCLC's 15th Anniversary celebration in Chiang Mai. The Good News is being proclaimed to "the ends of the earth"!

It is this message of salvation and forgiveness that you are helping Garuna bring to the peoples of Southeast Asia. As you well know, 98% of the population there is unaware of the meaning of Christmas. So, thank you very much for your prayers and gifts that support Garuna and its ministry of sharing this Good News through Bible teaching, national Lutheran Church planting, and by providing Christian (Lutheran) schools in the region.

May God fill you and your family with the joy and peace of Jesus once again this Christmas season.

Sincerely in Jesus our Savior,

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



"Joy to the World!" Members from southern Thailand share Christ in their traditional Thai dress.



UPDATES

Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) Update



LISA held its semi-annual leadership training event this past October 23th - 25th in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Thirty LISA leaders from six different countries met for Bible study, leadership topics, prayer, fellowship, and planning during their time together. Many thanks to Mr. Fred Voigtmann, Dr. Leonard Harms, and Rev. Ted NaThalang for leading various sessions. A particularly enjoyable part of each leadership seminar is the devotion and update each country team presents to the group. These times are extremely valuable as the leaders come together to learn, grow, and then return home to implement the LISA classes in their own areas and languages.

The LISA pastors' wives, all of whom are active in ministry with their husbands, had a delightful time of study and sharing at the LISA seminar.



Update on the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church (TCLC)

The TCLC celebrated their 15th Anniversary this past October 21st – 23rd in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This very special event was celebrated with 110 participants – pastors, deaconesses, lay leaders, ministry partners, and friends of the TCLC. They gathered for a time of Bible study, worship, training, meeting, prayer, and fellowship. Rev. Ted NaThalang is the Chairman of the TCLC. He serves with a very strong Board of Directors composed of nine church leaders who are dedicated to bringing the Gospel to the people of Thailand and surrounding countries. Please keep this young Church body in your prayers as they share Jesus in challenging settings.



TCLC church leaders from Bangkok lead worship in Chiang Mai.



Jeff is leading a Bible study during the LISA session.



Rev. NaThalang recognizes Garuna for its partnership with the TCLC in bringing the Good News of Jesus to the people of Thailand.



GOOD NEWS TO SHARE



GARUNA KIDS AND GARUNA CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS



A new school year is starting in Cambodia. November is “back to school” time and our students are advancing a grade level and receiving new uniforms, books, backpacks, and supplies. The Garuna Christian Schools are open year-round, but there is still something nice about new beginnings and fresh starts!

The Garuna Kids learn English, Khmer, Math, and Bible at the schools. The teachers are doing a great job of teaching in creative ways, using their resources wisely.



New School Coming Soon!

Building plans are being finalized for the start of construction on GCS #7. This school is located on the outskirts of the capital city (Phnom Penh) and will serve as a headquarters for the Garuna ministry in Cambodia. There will be a school for 200-300 students in K-6, offices, a church plant, and there is room on the property for future training facilities (LISA). Expected completion: Summer of 2020.



CONGRATULATIONS!



Congratulations to the Garuna Kids who received awards as the top 5 students in their grade levels (K-6). They received school supplies and certificates as their parents and fellow students joined together in October to celebrate the end of the 2018-19 school year.



The top student at each school receives a new bike!



Mr. Veasna, Garuna Cambodia Organization's Project Director, is leading the search for land in Siem Reap for Garuna Christian School #8, scheduled to be built in 2021. The leadership team is visiting with local rice farmers to consider best options for the school site. Funding has been provided for the land

purchase and the process of securing partners for the building of this school is underway. Garuna is thankful for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and School in Fremont, California, for taking a significant partnership role with Garuna in helping develop Garuna Christian Schools and church planting in the Siem Reap area.



Joy to the World



It's a Cambodian Christmas party at the GCS in Tbong Khmum. Each of the schools plan their own Christmas outreach celebration, inviting family and members of the village. At these events, the students sing, share traditional music and dance, enjoy food, and share the Christmas message. Last year over 2,000 people participated in the GCS Christmas outreach events. The decorations take on their own creative style – sometimes resembling typical red/green themes...or perhaps something more festive as is evident here. The message is the same: Jesus has come to save the world!

Thank You!

We thank God for these Garuna Christian School principals, vice principals, and Bible teachers who are the leaders for the 6 schools in Cambodia. They meet regularly to plan, learn, study God's Word, and share ideas. These educators are working hard to design ministries to share Jesus with the children and their families, while also starting new Bible studies and worship groups in their communities.



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

WHERE NEEDED MOST

Any amount is greatly appreciated!

LISA Theological/Bible Training Projects

- LISA Student Sponsorship: \$50 per month/\$600 per year
- LISA Theological Material Expenses: \$1,000/per year
- LISA Leadership Seminar: \$4,000/each seminar

Garuna Schools & Garuna Kids Projects:

- Garuna Kid scholarship: \$30/month or \$360/year
- Garuna Teacher sponsorship: \$100/month or \$1200/year
- Garuna Christian School Teacher Training: \$5,000/year
- Construction cost for one new classroom: \$20,000

Have you considered these ways to give to the Garuna Ministries?

- **Thrivent Choice** – Are you a member of Thrivent Financial and eligible to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars? If so, you might consider sharing them with the Garuna Foundation ministries.
- **IRA Charitable Rollovers or IRA RMD's** can provide an opportunity for stewards over 70½ to make gifts to Garuna from their IRAs directly no income taxes due on rolled over or donated funds.
- **Estate Planning** Have you considered leaving a legacy gift for Garuna as a part of your estate planning?
- **AmazonSmiles** – Garuna is registered with Amazon. Please consider making Garuna the charity of your choice when visiting Amazon. (smile.amazon.com)



Garuna Kids love learning about Jesus.



LISA leaders proudly displaying their "Live Generously" Thrivent shirts.



The LISA country leaders at the recent LISA Leadership Seminar in Chiang Mai

If you are led to make a donation to Garuna, your check may be made payable to **The Garuna Foundation**. Gifts may be mailed to: **The Garuna Foundation, 2924 E. Cholla 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. Garuna will mail a gift receipt to the address you provide. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

