

BURST FORTH WITH  
— WITH —

*Joy*

**But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. Acts 2:24**

We are "bursting at the seams" with joy because of the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection and with thankful hearts at God's blessings through Garuna's ministry. This newsletter shares some of those joyful events and outcomes that are a result of your partnership in the Gospel and by God's abundant grace!

## A LIFE'S JOURNEY TOWARD JOY AND HOPE!



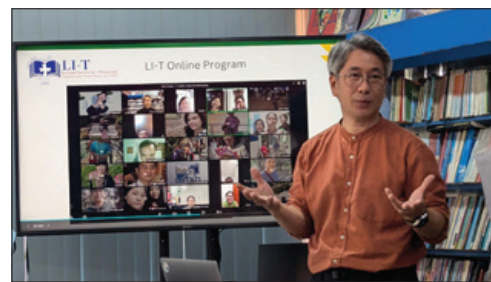
Pastor Niran Temsakun and his wife, Esther.

**Niran Temsakun shares joy and smiles wherever he goes.** He lives in northern Thailand with his wife, Esther, and son, Jabez. He is a pastor in the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church (TCLC), and he serves as Garuna's Luther Institute-Thailand (LI-T) Bible training coordinator. He has amazing gifts, and he shares his joy and hope wherever he goes.

But his younger days were much different. As a young boy growing up in a Buddhist culture, it was common and even expected for boys to be ordained as youth monks. This is a way to honor one's parents and gain merit for oneself and the family. Niran was ordained twice between the ages of 13 and 15, during school breaks, for about a month and a half each time. **"I had hoped it would bring clarity and peace, but I found no real answers – only a path of continual effort without assurance.** There were no promises of forgiveness or hope beyond this life, only the pressure to keep trying and to be 'good enough'. **I lived in fear, unsure if I would ever find a way to be free from guilt or to be accepted after death."**

But by God's grace, Niran heard the Gospel. Through the preaching of a pastor, he learned that Jesus Christ is our Savior, and that we can receive forgiveness and new life – not because of what we do, but because of what He has done for us. **That message brought him hope, freedom, and joy.**

"I no longer live in fear but in the assurance of His grace and the promise of eternal life. **This new life in Christ has transformed me.** It is no longer about what I can do to reach heaven but about responding to His love by serving others and sharing His Good News with those still searching. I thank God every day for this gift, and I pray that many others in Thailand will come to know the same hope that only Jesus can give."



The name Niran literally means "one who is everlasting and never ending." Niran's joy is due to the promise of everlasting life from a Savior whose love for him is never ending. **Pastor Niran is now ordained as a Lutheran pastor and shares Jesus with the people of his homeland – Thailand.** And that he does with fervor and joy!





## BURSTING WITH BAPTISM JOY

In the past few months, **there were more than 90 baptisms among the 10 Garuna Christian Schools, Sunday Schools, and at Garuna's Luther Institute-Cambodia Center.** Adults and children alike are eager to learn about Jesus and trust in His Resurrection promise. It is a great joy to see God's Word moving in a region where less than 2% trust in Jesus as their Savior!



## EXPLODING CHAPEL GOALS

Lutheran students around the USA are sharing their love and resources with the Garuna Kids in Cambodia through their chapel offerings. Trinity Lutheran School in Litchfield Park, AZ is one such school. **They raised enough to sponsor 11 Garuna Kids for an entire year! But they still want to do more!**

They plan to join Valley Lutheran High School in Phoenix in the coming year to see if the mighty duo can sponsor 30 kids in all! WOW!



## BIBLE TEACHING SURGES IN ASIA

Garuna's Luther Institute-SE Asia (LISA) Bible classes have been taught in this region for over 20 years. **They were originally taught by western instructors but are now taught by the indigenous leaders who are training the next generation of teachers.** The LISA courses are being edited, formatted, and standardized. There is a growing demand around the world for its use. Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers is seen on Zoom encouraging this LISA New Testament class cohort of 50 students who met in March in Phnom Penh.



## JUBILATION AT THE GCS #10 DEDICATION

On January 17, a large crowd gathered in Kampong Chhnang province to dedicate the newest Garuna Christian School (GCS) which was built by Desert Foothills Lutheran Church (DFLC) in Scottsdale, AZ. **There are 304 students enrolled at this school, bringing the current Garuna system enrollment to 2,060 with 70 teachers.** The community leaders and families are very excited and thankful for this opportunity in their village. And DFLC members are excited and thankful to provide this for them.





## NEWS BLAST: "CAMP GARUNA" COMING SOON

Garuna's creative content developer has prepared a wonderful resource for your school, church, family, VBS, or camp! This resource brings scripted lessons, videos, power points, and printable activities to your inbox.

**For the 3rd year in a row, you will get to see what life is like in Cambodia and at the Garuna Christian Schools.**

It's a great chance to raise mission enthusiasm and awareness for all ages in a fun and educational way. Simply email Liane for the resources! (liane@garuna.org)

**BURSTING FORTH WITH  
...EASTER JOY!**



## PARENTS SHARE AN OUTPOURING OF APPRECIATION

How can you best help develop a community? Garuna's philosophy is to educate the children, teens, teachers, and families through Christian schools, Bible training, professional development, and youth programs. Providing employment for faculty, leaders and our construction workers is also a benefit to the communities. Garuna recently created a pension plan for its workers to show care and teach financial literacy. **It's a joy to prioritize spiritual growth in a way that encourages community development as well.**



## BUBBLIN' OVER...WITH EASTER JOY

**Garuna Kids in Thailand and Cambodia learn about the joy that Jesus brings as they study using Bible stories and songs that share that life-changing message.** In Cambodia, 2,060 students attend the 10 Garuna Christian Schools. Hundreds of Garuna Kids in northern Thailand learn about Jesus when our Chiang Mai team visits their government school to teach about God's love through English, Chinese, and music lessons.



## GIFTS SHOWERED ON THE VILLAGE

Keychains made by 4th graders at St. John Lutheran School (Orange, CA) were recently shared with children in a community where Garuna Christian School (GCS) #12 will be built and opened this year. Garuna principals Samol and San Ran shared these gifts and spoke about the new school that is coming to their village. Garuna's donors generously provide gifts of sponsorships, construction and repair funds, Bible training gifts, cards, notes, prayers, and more. **We love being your "boots on the ground" to share your love with those who appreciate it so much!**





## FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

*Dear Friends in the Living Christ,*

**Good Friday / Easter  
Death / Resurrection**

What a bittersweet combination of words. Death is a **bitter** reality we all face. We feel its pain and sorrow to the core of our soul when a loved one dies. Conversely, the truth of Jesus' victory over the grave and His resurrection is **sweet** beyond measure.

I cannot imagine the sadness of facing eternity without God's promises of forgiveness and eternal life with Him in paradise.

Recently, God called home a wonderful servant. Mr. Mayavuth was one of the first Garuna Christian School teachers. He taught since 2013 in Prey Veng, Cambodia and was instrumental in the school's formation and ministry. He loved Jesus. He loved sharing the Easter message with the children of his community. He tirelessly shared the love of Christ in Bible class each day and Sunday School classes each weekend. He loved God's Word and attended LISA classes faithfully. Selfishly, his passing felt **bitter**. We miss him.

I cannot imagine the **bitter** suffering and hardship Mayavuth endured in his early years during the very difficult Khmer Rouge era. But I can imagine the **sweet** joy he experienced when he learned of Jesus' love for him and the promise of eternal life in paradise.



**Mayavuth knew and believed that Jesus is preparing a place for all who trust in Him (John 14:1-3), that He is coming back to take us to be with him (1 Thess. 4:14), and that our permanent home is heaven (Phil 3:20).**

Imagine the joy we all will experience when Jesus calls us home and raises us from mortality to immortality with HIM in HIS Kingdom.

May our lives reflect the joy of the resurrection to others,

**Rev. Dr. Jeff Ehlers  
Chairman  
Garuna Ministries**



*A drawing of a  
Cambodian (earthly)  
home by a GCS student  
who now has learned  
about his heavenly home!*

## "GUSHING" GENEROSITY OPTIONS

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

**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 giving options?

- **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](mailto:jeff@garuna.org)*

