

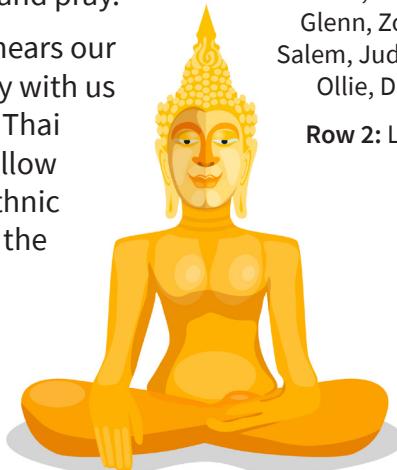
PRAYER GUIDE *for Thailand*

2021

Welcome

The Buddhist Lent period extends from July through to October, the rainy season in Thailand. Buddhists use this time to cleanse themselves of the “bad” in their life and often make pledges to abstain from certain practises such as drinking alcohol. Buddhist monks spend this time at the temple studying Buddha’s scriptures, meditating and chanting. It is common practise for a Thai monk to wake well before the sun has risen to chant, meditate and pray.

We know there is one true God who hears our prayers. We want to invite you to pray with us during this lent period for the Ethnic Thai people. This guide will help you to follow the needs and prayer points of the Ethnic Thai and the intercultural workers in the Global Interaction Ethnic Thai Team.



Ethnic Thai Team 2021

Row 1: Muana, Yindii, Villy, Isaiah, Carolyn, Petina, Glenn, Zoe, Liz, Grace, Salem, Judah, Belle, Luke, Ollie, Daniel, Dema

Row 2: Libi, Seb, Levi

Living among the Ethnic Thai

Ethnic Thai culture is steeped in the belief that the cycle of death and rebirth continues until it's broken through enhanced personal wisdom. Buddhism is an intrinsic part of Ethnic Thai culture with many believing to be Thai is to be Buddhist. This makes it challenging for Ethnic Thai people to see how they can follow Jesus without rejecting their culture and community.

God is at work among the Ethnic Thai and He is drawing people to Himself. Over the past years, the team has built relationships within their community, begun to share stories of Jesus and walked with people as they have chosen to follow Him.

This journey to faith is by the grace of God. Praise God that numerous faith communities are now regularly meeting and local leaders are being equipped to teach and lead their own people. These small faith communities are discovering what it means to follow Jesus in a distinctively Thai way.



Northern Thailand

Week 1 25 July - 31 July

Khao Phansa Buddhist Lent - Opening Day

In Thailand, "Khao Phansa" directly translates to "entering the rainy season". Traditionally this was the first day in which Buddhist Monks remained in one place during the rainy season to avoid killing insects or trampling on growing crops. Offerings of candles and garments were made to the temple to provide necessities, such as lighting in the days of no electricity. It is believed that the candle represents brightness.

Nowadays the opening of Khao Phansa is celebrated with many ceremonies held at temples all over Thailand. These ceremonies involve offerings of giant candles, a symbol of the traditional practises. Monks chant from the Buddhist scripture and share teachings on abstaining from; killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray that, at this time of renewed spiritual activity, doors of dialogue between followers of Jesus and our Buddhist friends may be opened. That the truth of Jesus will be shared.
- » Please pray that Jesus may reveal himself to people through dreams and other encounters. That He would be revealed as the true Light of the World.
- » Please pray for opportunities for the believers in each Community of Faith, that they would be bold during this Lent period to share with others their faith in Jesus.

Week 2 1 Aug - 7 Aug

Farming and Livelihoods

In Northern Thailand, for many people farming is not only their way of life, but their main and often sole source of income. Many are subsistence farmers; that is, growing just enough food for their family for the year.

Rice is the staple crop, but other crops such as corn, rubber, fruits and vegetables are also grown and sometimes sold. As such, Thai farmers are highly dependent upon rain for their livelihoods, particularly as rice needs continual, steady rainfall to grow. Without decent rain, crops suffer, impacting livelihoods. Many of the believers in the Communities of Faith are subsistence farmers.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray for rain. Pray that this nation will receive the rainfall it needs this year to sustain the livelihoods and wellbeing of its people.
- » Pray that the crops and farms of the people will produce good fruit and be plenty for themselves and their families. Pray for good prices for their produce.
- » Pray that people will trust in God to provide for their needs and that of their family – that He will send the rain and they will know it is from Him.
- » Pray for the Holy Spirit to rain down on this nation and produce strong fertile crops for God's Kingdom.

Week 3 8 Aug - 14 Aug

Ethnic Thai Team

The Ethnic Thai team is spread out over three locations in Northern Thailand. The team meets together four times a year for team meetings. These meetings are a great time of fellowship, encouragement, strategic planning, trouble shooting and prayer.

The onset of COVID-19 has affected the team's ability to meet together regularly, however they have been able to use technology to stay in contact.

The Ethnic Thai team values unity and encourages individuals within the team to use their own gifts, to not only build each other up, but also to support each other in ministry.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray for team unity, and for the team to continue to love and care for each other.
- » During this time of major change and uncertainty due to COVID-19, pray for good health and for protection from COVID-19, both physically and mentally. Pray for protection for their families back home in Australia and India.

Week 4 15 Aug - 21 Aug

Ethnic Thai Team

The Ethnic Thai team's role is to build relationships with people in their communities, in order to share Jesus with them. They do this through engaging in meaningful platforms, such as teaching English and beauty therapy.

Their priority is to have the ability to communicate and see life from the worldview and perspective of those they live among. Deepening their cultural awareness and language ability allows them to share Jesus in a way that makes sense to the Ethnic Thai.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray the team will continue to gain deeper cultural understanding and learn the language and worldview of the people they share with.
- » Please pray that the team will be able to find genuine ways to share the truth of Jesus with people in their community and that they will be open to that truth.

Week 5 22 Aug - 28 Aug

Ban Sra Community of Faith

The Ban Sra Community of Faith has been meeting together since 2006. Since then, Muana and Villy have moved to another ministry area. Although this faith community are still supported through training events and staff visits, they continue to thrive on their own. As they share their faith within their community, they are seeing family and friends come to know Jesus.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray for the leaders and this family network of believers as they bring light to this community.
- » Praise God for seekers, like Pin, who are now growing in their faith. Pray for them to be good witnesses to their families and friends.
- » Please pray for the seekers in the community to come to an understanding of the truth of Jesus. May they see the transformation He makes in the lives of others and grow hungry to know more. May they come to know the hope, love and forgiveness found only in Christ.
- » A number of seekers are listening to the Word of God through MP3 players. Pray for the Holy Spirit to break through any barriers, and for the words they are listening to become real from seeing the lives of the believers.

Week 6 29 Aug - 4 Sept

Ban Luang and Ban Faa

The Ban Luang and Ban Faa Communities of Faith have been meeting together since 2013 and 2014 respectively. Many Global Interaction staff have worked with these communities, helping shape and grow them in their faith in Jesus. After all these years, these groups are now being led by local leaders, allowing Global Interaction to seek new areas of ministry.

While these communities of faith have a strong leadership and faithful members, lately there have been some challenges in interpersonal relationships within the group.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray that as these communities become more self-sufficient, the believers will become strong in faith and continue to rely on God and His provision.
- » Pray for healing in relationships, and for believers to continue to mature in their faith and its outworking in their relationships.
- » Please pray for wisdom and commitment for the leaders as they serve their communities of faith.
- » Pray that the Holy Spirit will be revealed through dreams, healing and revelation to those who are seeking to know Him more.

Week 7 5 Sept - 11 Sept

Chiang Mai and Sanpatong Communities of Faith

The Sanpatong Community of Faith is comprised of a group of believers and seekers. They are all related to one another and live in the same village. It started with Ot working in the city who had a burden for her dad. Ot's dad invited his cousin, sister and brother-in-law to start studying the scriptures together. After two years, she brought her younger brother Kasem along, who is now the leader of this group, and they now meet regularly in his front yard. There have been challenging periods of opposition from other members in the wider community.

The Community of Faith continue to learn what it means to be followers of Jesus and witnesses of the Gospel in their context.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray for Muana and Villy living in Chiang Mai. That God will equip them to love and serve the people there.
- » Please pray for the Chiang Mai Community of Faith who continue to meet in M&V's home, that God will give them courage and influence in sharing the Gospel with their family and friends in their communities. May their lives remain firm in Christ and may their witness produce much fruit.
- » Please pray for the empowering and equipping of the leaders, in leading and teaching their communities, and for the believers to actively practice their faith as followers of Jesus in their daily lives.

Week 8 12 Sept - 18 Sept

Chiang Rai - Eastside

Global Interaction has been working in Chiang Rai since 2016 and now works in two locations within the province. The Eastside location currently has three units serving in this area. The main bridge that they use in their communities is to teach English at the local schools. This provides them with opportunities to not only serve their community, but also to build relationships.

It has been exciting to see God move among the Ethnic Thai in this location. A new Bible study group has started to meet weekly to learn more about Jesus and to study God's Word together.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray for Dema and Carolyn, Petina, and Glenn and Liz as they live in the eastern side of Chiang Rai. Pray that God will equip them to love and serve the people there.
- » Praise God for the new Bible study group that has begun to meet. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be present when they meet, and for God to give Carolyn and Dema wisdom as they minister to the group.
- » Pray that as people within this community become followers of Jesus, a vibrant faith community will be established to support and love one another.

Week 9 19 Sept - 25 Sept

Chiang Rai - Westside

The team has determined a new ministry location in Ban Pa Oo Don Chai, which is south-west of the main city of Chiang Rai. Ban Pa Oo Don Chai is a subdistrict with 21 villages and has a world famous temple, Wat Rong Khun, otherwise known as the White Temple. Luke, Belle and their three sons will begin life and ministry in Ban Pa Oo Don Chai starting from August 2021.

There are opportunities for Luke to connect into the local art community and build relationships in that sphere, and Belle will continue to teach English in local schools. As always, they will be seeking opportunities to make Jesus known in meaningful ways through their relationships.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray for the Harlands as they transition into this new location; for the boys as they transition into school and for Luke and Belle as they begin building relationships and seek to discern God's will for their ministry.
- » Please pray that the Holy Spirit will transform this family to be more like Jesus every day. That those around them will see and want what they have in Christ.
- » Please pray for holy "interruptions" in their everyday that lead to conversations about faith, life, and ultimately God's Kingdom and His Gospel.
- » Please pray for humility and perseverance as they delve deeper into their culture and language learning.

Week 10 26 Sept - 2 Oct

The Stronghold of Spirits and the need to make merit

Thai people generally practise folk Buddhism, which is heavily influenced by animistic beliefs. The life of a Thai person is affected by the spirit world daily. Most Thai people make offerings to *spirit houses*, a small temple like structure usually located in the front yard of their home or business, to appease spirits and bring them good luck.

The process of making merit is one that is often hard for a westerner to understand. It's based on the Law of Karma, in which they believe the good and bad affect every part of their present and future lives. Thai people often measure a person's merit based on their material possessions and health.

The amount of merit making and appeasing of spirits needed in order to have a "good life" is impossible to know. As such, many Thai people are uncertain about their future. Continuing in an often disappointing and defeating routine leaves many still searching for the peace they are longing for.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray that the Thai people will come to understand that Jesus' sacrifice is all they need to receive freedom from their bad deeds and escape the cycle that holds them captive.
- » Pray that Thai people will find freedom in Jesus and be released from the fear of spirits.
- » Pray that the power of the Holy Spirit will move over the nation of Thailand.

Week 11 3 Oct - 9 Oct

Leaders of the Communities of Faith

The leaders of each Community of Faith serve as logistical support, teachers of the Bible and pastoral carers for the groups in which they serve. Thai people are very relaxed and it is often left to these leaders to pull each group and its meetings together.

These people are lay leaders with no formal Bible training. Training weekends are usually held regularly. Here, the leaders and potential leaders of the communities come together for further Bible teaching, learning contextualized leadership skills and discussing issues within the groups. Unfortunately these gatherings have paused due to COVID-19. Without this regular encouragement, the leaders have found it more difficult to lead and engage with the groups.

Prayer Points

- » Pray for the leaders of each group, that they would continue to have the passion to lead their groups, even though they have been unable to attend training weekends due to COVID-19.
- » Pray that they would continue to lead these groups with grace, love, wisdom and gentleness.
- » Pray for wisdom for the Global Interaction staff as they find creative ways to train and encourage during COVID-19.

Week 12 10 Oct - 16 Oct

Workers for the Field

Global Interaction currently has five families (and another coming soon) working in three locations with the Ethnic Thai. The team is in need of more workers to come and help them share the Gospel, especially in the areas close to the established Communities of Faith in Nan and Phayao.

There are opportunities to serve in both providing support and in long-term roles. Global Interaction has a vision to see three new families or single staff members join the team as soon as possible.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray that God would speak directly into the hearts of those He is calling to serve in Thailand.
- » Please pray for God to raise up a group of workers together to continue the rural ministry in the Nan, Phayao and Phrae areas.

Week 13 17 Oct - 23 Oct

COVID-19

In 2020 Thailand's response to COVID-19 was ranking amongst the best in the world, with less than 5,000 total cases for the first 15 months of the pandemic. Since then, Thailand has been hit with 2 waves, with the last wave still lingering. By the end of June, Thailand had roughly 250,000 cases.

Initially, Thailand fared well due to the people's compliance to authority, general hygiene and also fear. As this third wave has lingered, this fear has continued in the general population, with many people continuing to stay home and not wanting to interact with those that are not absolutely necessary. As our team lives in or close to provincial cities, this has made ministry visits to encourage others difficult.

The vaccine rollout has also been very slow, which, along with a fear of the vaccine, has made getting back to 'normal' life difficult. The economic impact has been profound on both the government and individuals throughout the country, especially those involved in tourism.

Week 14 24 Oct - 30 Oct

Ook Phansa

Buddhist Lent - Closing Day

"Ook Phansa" translates to "the day of leaving the rains retreat". The end of the three month Buddhist Lent period is here and the rains begin to clear. Monks can now leave the temple, restrictions are lifted and life returns to 'normal'. Usually there is a Khatin around this time (a large community-oriented merit making festival).

Prayer Points

- » Please pray for the leaders of this country as they contend with restarting the economy and rolling out the vaccine in a safe and fair way.
- » Pray for those that have been left with nothing due to the economic hardships, and the pressure this puts on their relationships.
- » Pray for the people of Thailand to turn to the hope that Jesus gives to all who come to Him.
- » Pray for the team to be gracious and wise in dealing with the needs of those around them. Pray for opportunities to be more involved in the lives of those around them.

Prayer Points

- » Please pray that as this Buddhist Lent period is now over, that God will continue to reveal Himself to individuals and groups in this nation throughout the next year.
- » Please continue to pray for Global Interaction workers, and all those who are working amongst the Thai Buddhists, that they will be equipped and strengthened for the task.
- » Please pray that people will be fervent in seeking out Jesus and the freedom and life He brings.