

Lutheran Service Book 833

# Listen, God Is Calling

Sunday, December 1 at 8:00 & 10:45

First Sunday in Advent – 2013

Wednesday Advent Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today, *as we focus on the words of the hymn, Listen, God Is Calling*, we will touch briefly on these themes:

- We are forgiven through Jesus!
- We want others to hear the good news!
- We remember the ministry of LIA!
- We pray for perseverance!

1. **Refrain – We are forgiven through Jesus:**

- God is good!* He has called us through *His Word* to receive *His forgiveness* through Jesus! Paul gave this description: “...**God chose you...to be saved... To this he called you through our gospel...**” (2Th 2:13-14 ESV)
- So now, *through Jesus*, we have God’s gift of eternal life! Therefore, when we sing: “**Listen, listen, God is calling Through the Word inviting, Offering forgiveness, Comfort, and joy,**” we praise God for calling us; then enabling us to receive His *forgiveness, comfort, and joy!*

2. **Stanza 1 – We want others to hear the good news:**

- Whenever God shows us **the bad news** of what our sins deserve; then assures of **the good news** of what we have freely received through Jesus, it is natural for us to want others to *know the truth and be set free!*
- Shortly before Jesus ascended into heaven, He said these words to His eleven disciples: “**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them... [and], teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...**” (Mat 28:19-20 NAS)  
Therefore, we sing: “**Jesus gave His mandate: Share the good news That He came to save us And set us free.**” So it is the gospel, **the good news**, the truth of who Jesus is—the Son of God, what He has done—taking our sins and our punishment, and our God-given faith in Him, which sets us free! Jesus said: “...**you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**” (John 8:32 ESV)

3. **Stanza 2 – We remember the ministry of LIA:**

- Think about those who NEED to hear the good news of Jesus’ saving work – such people live in our *community, state, nation, and world!* Since all have sinned, *all need Jesus!* Therefore, our Savior called Rev. James May to **form African Christians to be teachers of the faith!**
- So when we sing these words: “**Let none be forgotten Throughout the world. In the Triune name of God Go and baptize,**” we should

♦remember, ♦pray for, and ♦support the teaching ministries of Rev. May, Dr. Giessler, and others! God has *gifted* and *called* those men to serve in **far away** and **difficult** ministries; *then they went* – NOT because it is easy, BUT because many in Africa **†desperately need Jesus** AND **†are hungry to hear the good news!**

#### 4. **Stanza 3 – We pray for perseverance:**

- a. We were dead in our sins (Eph. 2:1), so God made us alive in Christ (Eph. 2:4-5)! We were helpless, but now we can cooperate. The Formula of Concord says “**that after this conversion the reborn human will is not idle in the daily exercise of repentance, but cooperates in all the works of the Holy Spirit which he [the Holy Spirit] performs through us.**<sup>1</sup>
- b. Therefore, according to our **new nature**, we desire to fully cooperate, but, at the same time, our **old nature** is trying to pull us away from our Savior. So, thinking about that constant struggle, we sing: “**Help us to be faithful, Standing steadfast, Walking in Your precepts, Led by Your Word.**”

**Conclusion:** Let us not merely sing the hymn, but let us also: **†rejoice** in God’s forgiveness, **†care** about the salvation of others, **†support** the ministry of Lutherans in Africa, and **†benefit** from God’s Word every single day! **Amen!**

<sup>1</sup> Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (p. 494). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

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### The Ministry of Lutherans in Africa:

- Our congregation has several significant connections:
  - Rev. James May and his family are members of BLC.
  - Other congregations and individuals from the USA and some other countries send their LIA support to BLC.
  - Jim Schabel and I serve with others—*Jonathan in Illinois and Karina in California*—on the LIA board.
- Regular contributions to LIA go toward the following:
  - Rent for the May Family House / Mission Center.
  - Rev. May’s salary, health insurance, local transportation, teaching trips to 20 countries in Africa, and more.
- The capital campaign to build a mission training center in Kenya:
  - It will eventually eliminate the cost of rent.
  - It will provide for more thorough teaching.
  - It will reduce the teaching trips, since more will come to Rev. May rather than him going to them.
  - It will be self-sustaining by its use of solar electricity, its own water well, and students building their own housing and growing their own food.
  - Find out more:
    - See the display today in the Narthex; help yourself to the various resources: campaign brochure, Bible study, pledge card, etc.
    - Go to [www.lutheransinafrica.com](http://www.lutheransinafrica.com) to view a special campaign video and much more.
- Your prayer support is always needed and appreciated. If the LORD leads you to give *financial support*, make all checks payable to “Bethlehem Lutheran Church”
  - *Regular* contributions, designate “LIA”
  - *Campaign* contributions, designate “Capital Campaign”

**For Much More:** [www.blc7500.com](http://www.blc7500.com) OR [www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com](http://www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com)  
**Live God’s Word; then share it with family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers!**  
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