



# Small Group Study Guide for December 15, 2024

*Our Savior Lutheran Church and School*

**Theme:** The little town of Bethlehem had a big role to play in the Bible. It was the hometown of King David and King Jesus. Contrary to the expectations of the world, God chooses the small and lowly to do great things by His grace.

## **Getting Started: (sharing with each other)**

1. How have you seen the Lansing area change over the years you have lived here?
2. How many manger scenes do you have in your home, and are any of them special keepsakes?

## **In the Word: Read 1 Samuel 17:12-15**

3. Jesse was the grandson of Boaz, whose wife was Ruth. He is called an “Ephrathite” which is someone from Ephratha, the region of Bethlehem. What details about his son David can you collect from this passage in 1 Samuel? Write a description of David below.
4. Bethlehem is first mentioned in Genesis 35, when Jacob buried his wife Rachael when she died on the way to “Ephrath, that is Bethlehem.” It is the home town of one of the judges, Ibzan, who also died and was buried there (Judges 12). Most of the book of Ruth takes place in the village of Bethlehem. It is an ancient place! But it was always in the shadow of Jerusalem, which became the royal capital and location of the temple. Bethlehem stayed small and humble. What is it significant that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem and not in mighty and impressive Jerusalem?

## **Read Micah 5:2-5a**

5. The prophet Micah even acknowledged how small and humble Bethlehem was. And yet, another ruler would come from David’s home town. How does this passage describe the ruler to come, especially in verses 2, 4, and 5? See how many description words or phrases you can find.

6. David was a shepherd boy from Bethlehem. Micah prophesied that the ruler to come would “stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord.” How do these references connect to Jesus and the Christmas story?

**Putting it all Together (what do we believe or do as disciples?)**

7. Bethlehem is still a lowly and humble place in the world. Without getting too negative, what makes the Lansing area a lowly and humble place in the world, compared with other cities?
8. Just like Bethlehem was significant because of the people associated it, how do the people living in and around Lansing endear us to this place and make it wonderful?
9. How does God’s love for Lansing and all the people in our area guide and direct the purpose and mission of our church and school?
10. Have you invited anyone to our Living Nativity, Advent events or Christmas Eve services?

**Prayer:** Ask the Lord to bless our witness in these coming days as we welcome the community to hear the Good News of the Savior at our Advent and Christmas celebrations. Also ask the Lord to bless our homes as we gather with family to fill them with His love, peace, forgiveness, and joy. May we reach the greater Lansing area with the Gospel in all that we do.

**Next Week:** The Fourth Sunday of Advent looks at the promise of Immanuel – God with us. This is God’s great promise to us, that He will truly be with us with His goodness and grace to the very end of the age.

**Note:** The last OSL School concert is Wednesday, December 18, as Grades 1-4 sing their songs. The Living Nativity is Saturday December 21! There are three Christmas Eve services at 3, 5, and 7 p.m.