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Since the fourth century, the church has held midnight service every Christmas. Officially speaking, the two most solemn services of the church every year are the vigil service on Easter and the midnight service on Christmas. The Christmas Day Eucharist service is actually the second service for the celebration of the birth of Christ. We hope that in 2024, we can re-establish the midnight Service.

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Every year on Christmas, churches all over the world read the story of the birth of Jesus. Because the birth of Christ is about everyone in the world and affects all nations, from Israel to the world. In Jerusalem, there is a church called the "Church of All Nations," which is intended to express that Christ was born for all nations in the world, and that all authority in heaven and earth ultimately belongs to Him and rests upon His shoulders. No leader on earth can replace or be equivalent to Him.

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The kings and leaders of the world bring conflicts, but only Jesus Christ brings true peace. It is the Prince of Peace whom we praise and look up to. The prophecy of the prophet Isaiah had already proclaimed the identity of Jesus Christ and the impacts He would bring. In Him, there is no oppression, no war, only righteousness, peace, and joy. Then, how can one prepare to welcome this King of kings? This is what Titus (2:12) instructed us, "to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly." Indeed, if you look around, you will see that there are many conflicts and misfortunes caused by people who do not fear God and are selfish, hurting themselves and others. There is only one way. Only when people obey God's words and teachings can all these bad things be changed.

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Let us go back to the story in the Luke, chapter 2. In the story of the birth of Jesus Christ, there is one thing very obviously, that is, a sign. The shepherds received the angel's message and then looked for the sign. The sign was manger. It is estimated that Mary gave birth to Jesus in a small room used for raising animals close to the inn, or perhaps in the stable on the ground floor of the inn. In the stable, there was a stone or wooden container for placing feed and water, which was the manger. The newly born Jesus was placed in a manger, a simple and uncomfortable place.

The manger is a very special sign. So when the shepherds saw a baby in the manger, they confirmed the angel's message and knew that it was the Savior. Shepherds were the first people to witness the birth of the Savior and the first people to preach the gospel after the birth of Jesus. They glorified and praised God for all they had heard and seen, just as the angels sang. The Gloria that we sing in worship was the hymn when Jesus Christ was born.

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The sign tells us what is going to happen ahead and guides us in the right direction. Some signs are given by God, while others may not be. Some signs indicate that something good is about to happen to you, and some signs are a warning to you.

But no matter what type of sign it is, the most important thing is that you can notice it. If you don't notice it, if you don't pay attention, it's like driving. When you miss the sign, you will get lost easily, or you will have to take a lot of wrong turns. When the shepherds saw the manger, they confirmed the angel's message and knew that the Kingdom of Heaven had come.

How many signs have appeared in your life leading you to know the Lord Jesus Christ? How many other signs have led you all the way to where you are and what you are today? Or maybe you missed a lot of signs in the past, causing you to miss a lot of opportunities. Or you don't know which direction you should go in now. Today we are celebrating what God had done for the world. You might as well cherish this moment and ask the Lord to give you another sign to guide you in the direction to follow.

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Christmas is a very special day for both believers and non-believers. It is not only a day of joy but also a proclamation that our Savior, who can guide people and bring peace to the world. Today, you may ask the Lord to give you peace so that you can have the strength to face the difficulties in life; you may ask the Lord to give you a clear heart to notice the signs God has given you, so that you may witness God's deeds and also make your life different. May the Lord's grace be upon you. Amen.