



Sharing God's Love in the Heart of the City

First Baptist Church of Silver Spring

9727 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, MD 20910-1458 • 301-754-1100 • www.fbcss.org

Multi-national, -cultural & -generational, united in Christ to worship, grow & serve

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HOW DID THE MAGI GET TO JERUSALEM?



We are all very familiar with Matthew's story about the birth of Jesus. And, we are also very familiar with our traditional interpretation of the story of the Persian Magi who saw a celestial sign telling them about the birth of a new king. That "star" eventually stopped over the house where Mary and Joseph were with their baby son, Jesus.

Was that "star" a thing moving around in the sky? Or, was it perhaps an angel or some similar conscious being?

Since the Enlightenment, there have been several naturalistic explanations for the "star." For some it was a ball of burning gas in space. Others said it was a planet or a conjunction of stars and planets with special symbolic meaning for ancient astrologers. These interpretations made their way into films like Franco Zeffirelli's "*Jesus of Nazareth*" (1977), and Catherine Hardwick's "*The Nativity Story*" (2006). In 2007, Frederick Larson produced a

documentary, *The Star of Bethlehem*, that said it was the planet Jupiter. But, modern astronomy can't explain how the star rested over a specific house. And, we never ask; How would the original readers of Matthew's gospel have thought about the star?

This year, Timothy Reckart, a Los Angeles based, 31-year-old animator with only one short film to his credit, directed *The Star* for Sony Pictures Animation, telling the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of the animals. After some research (Reckart's Harvard undergraduate work was in history), he produced a scene where the angel appeared to Mary and announced that she is about to conceive the Son of God (as in Luke's gospel). Then the angel turns into a ball of light and flies out her window, rising into the sky and becomes the star that draws the Magi to Bethlehem, nine months later. Angel to star; but was it a celestial body of light?

In 1993, Dale Allison (taught New Testament and Early Christianity at Pittsburgh Seminary where I started my doctoral work), wrote an article in the December issue of *Bible Review* titled, *What was the Star that Guided the Magi?* Allison argued that the original readers of Matthew's gospel would have read it to be an angel. He notes that the ancient Jews, like their Greek, Egyptian and Zoroastrian contemporaries considered stars as living beings associated with the gods. Philo, a first-century Jewish philosopher, wrote that God populated the heavens with *living creatures, but of a kind composed entirely of mind* just as God populated the seas with aquatic creatures and the earth with land animals.

Next time I'll tell you what the Bible says about that and what early Christian writings tell us. And, I promise it won't wreck your Christmas.

Pastor Mac

Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 10
4:00 p.m.
@ MHBC



Come let us adore Him as we celebrate our Savior's birth this Christmas with a Multicultural Concert. Round up the entire family- and your friends to come share in the spirit of the season with music and joy.

Featuring:

- ◆ Celebration Ringers
- ◆ First Baptist Church Choir
- ◆ Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel Choir
- ◆ Eglise Baptiste de la Foi Choir
- ◆ Montgomery Hills Baptist Church Choir
- ◆ Salem Gospel Ministries Choir

CHRISTMAS EVE - CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE

Sunday, December 24
at Montgomery Hills Baptist Church (MHBC)
9727 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

SHARE YOUR TRADITIONS

During the holiday season, many engage in family traditions such as gathering to watch the classic movie, Christmas Story, or walking through the neighborhoods to view all the decorated houses, or do a family volunteer activity to help persons in need. What are some of your favorite family holiday traditions that you look forward to? Send them to us by email at jb91771@msn.com and we'll share the list in our next issue of the Tie Line.

3 Ways to Give

Your tax-deductible contributions to the church may be received three ways:

- ◆ Placing cash and checks in the offering plate on Sunday morning (use your offering envelopes)
- ◆ ONLINE BILL PAY: You may contribute electronically through your bank's ONLINE BILL PAY feature.
- ◆ CYBER GIVING: You may contribute electronically through the church's website, FBCSS.org by clicking the Online Giving button. After setting up your personal profile, you may choose either to contribute a specific amount on a regular basis or make a one-time contribution.

The Wreath is On the Door

The wreath is on the door
And the snow is on the tree
God has laid His holy hands
On all that we can see.
Be quick to raise your voice
And praise what He has brought.
Keep now His love in every choice
And Christmas in every thought.

-- author, Unknown

TOUR BROOKSIDE GARDENS
 Wheaton, MD
Tuesday, December 19
5PM

Step into a magical winter wonderland illuminated with more than one million dazzling colorful lights shaped into hand-crafted, original art
 wers, animals and other natural elements. Stroll from garden to garden enjoying twinkling tree forms, fountains, sparkling snow-
 ead and more. After walking through the spectacular grounds we'll head o a meal at Stained Glass Pub. **Note:** the cost for the Brookside Gardens tour is \$2.00 per person. Your meal is a separate cost.



**LET IT
 SNOW**

“God ... does great things beyond our knowing. He says to the snow, ‘Fall to the earth’; likewise to his heavy, drenching rain. He shuts up all humankind indoors, so that all people may know his work” (Job 37:5-7, NABRE).

Snow, ice and cold can make winter a hassle. “Snow days” due to a blizzard may thrill students but usually inconvenience parents. But now and then, winter blankets the earth so heavily that it seems to quiet everything. We’re granted permission to hunker down at home, snuggle close with family or pets, enjoy a book or movie, make cocoa or cookies, and rest. It’s like a surprise sabbath — the gift of grace-time — when no one’s expected to get out the door or the driveway.

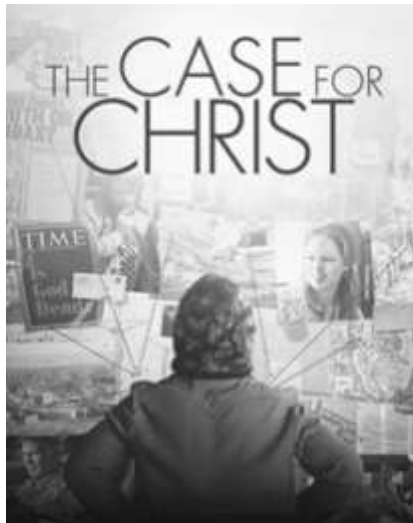
Perhaps indeed, as Job declared, God sees fit on such days to put our busyness on hold and shut us all indoors so we pause and remember his work — his place — in our lives. Praise God for snow days! So if (when) the first snow comes, view it as a blessing — a gift from God.

—Heidi Mann

**DINNER AND A
 MOVIE**

\$3.00 - What a Deal!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6
@ 6PM Enjoy an Italian style dinner for just \$3 per person.



@ 7PM we’ll gather to watch a compelling documentary film of one man's journey to disprove the growing Christian faith of his wife... with unexpected, life altering results! Feel free to bring snacks for the movie.

Location: MHBC



MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE
Saturday, January 20, 2018
10:00 a.m.

It's officially open! The Museum of the Bible located in Washington, DC is an innovative and global educational museum which documents the narrative, history and impact of the Bible. To go through the entire museum, viewing every exhibit and video, would take nine 8-hour days! We'll cover as much as we can in one visit so wear “comfy” walking shoes.

Departure: MHBC at 10:00 a.m.

**EVENT
 REGISTRATIONS**

Signup sheets are available on Sundays for all announced events. Please indicate your desire to attend by adding your name to the appropriate list so that the coordinators can plan accordingly. Some events may have limited spacing so we advise that you sign up early to reserve your space.

Sundays @ Takoma Park Community Center

10:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

11:30 a.m. Children's Bible Study

Weekday Bible Study

Mondays: 7:00PM @ 10775 McGregor Dr., Columbia 301-307-0021

Wednesdays: 1:30 p.m. @ MHBC 301-221-2607

7:00 p.m. Online Study 301-593-7882

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

3	Fran Walterman	19	Dick Stange
5	Monica Green	22	Joseph Kalute
9	Jim Reed	24	Millie Flickinger
12	Pamela Ghogomu	26	Florine Faulkner
14	Hunter Walterman*	28	Sara Carrier
18	Grace Mutuku		



*Indicates youth



Building Fund Up date

Received December 3

\$ 1,730.00

Total Funds Received:

\$839,189.35

PRAYER LIST

Each week the list of persons who have asked for specific prayer is posted in the Sunday Bulletin. Help us keep this list up-to-date. If you no longer need to have your name included on the prayer list, please inform the Ministerial staff, the Deacons, or contact the church office to remove your name from the list.

MEMBER INFORMATION UPDATES

Have you recently moved? Perhaps you've changed your phone number or email address? Sometimes it's hard to keep track of everyone who needs to be notified of your change. If any of your information has changed, please contact the church office at 301-754-1100 to let us know so that we can update our records with your current information.

SPEAKING OF MOVING....

We're getting very close to having a permanent location again. But before that happens there will be lots to do in preparation for the move into our brand new building.

Save your Saturdays in February to help us get ready because "**many hands make light work!**"

More details on specific needs and dates will be provided as it becomes available. Stay tuned.

Ministry Leaders - have an article or event you'd like to have included in the Tie Line? Send your information to Joanne Bellamy at jb91771@msn.com



**STAY
CONNECTED!**

Add your name to our listserv to receive important FBC family news, change notifications, event updates, reminders and more. You'll also get your Tie Line Newsletter sent to your inbox on your mobile device or computer. Send your name and email address to FBCSSTieLine@gmail.com and say "yes, add me to your list". (Note: Your email address will not be published or shared)

Duncan McIntosh, Proclam
Eric Walters, Associate Pastor
Gareth Murray, Associate Pastor
Valeria Foster, Worship & Administ
Joanne Bellamy, Administ ve Assistant
Gerald Piercey, Organist
Barbara Williams, Webmaster
Rosemary Piercey, Cele rs
Joanne Bellamy, The Tie Line