

The Tie Line



Sharing God's Love in the Heart of the City

First Baptist Church of Silver Spring

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

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HOW DID THE MAGI GET TO JERUSALEM?

PART II

In the last Tie Line I pointed out that the current Christmas film, *The Star*, presented a different take on the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem. In the movie, after the angel told Mary she would have a special child, the angel turned into a ball of light that flew out of her window, rising into the sky and became the star that guided the Magi to the child. Then I referred to an article in the December 1993 issue of *Bible Review* titled, *What Was the Star That Guided the Magi?* In it, Professor Allison argued, on the basis of ancient Near-Eastern literature, the Bible and early Christian and first century Jewish writings that the original readers of Matthew's gospel would have read the story as an angel guiding the Magi. I closed by quoting Philo, a first century Jewish philosopher who said that as God populated the seas with aquatic creatures and the earth with land animals, God also populated the heavens with *living creatures, but of a kind composed entirely of mind.*

Now, I want to turn back to the Bible where stars have human traits. In Judges 5:20, the stars in the heavens do battle against Sisera, an enemy of Israel. In Job 38:7, the stars join the angels in singing during the creation of the world. In Exodus 14:19, the slaves liberated from Egypt by the Lord are protected by *the angel of God and the pillar of cloud* while in



verse 24, God looks down *from the pillar of fire and the cloud at the Egyptian army and throws it into confusion.* The *pillar of fire* most likely is a cluster of stars to give light during the night as the cloud gives protection during the day in the desert. But, the *pillar of fire* is the same as *the angel of the Lord.*

Beside the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke, we have three other apocryphal writings from the second and sixth centuries: *The Infancy Gospels of Thomas and James* and the *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy*, which is the source of the infancy narrative in the Quran. In chapter 7 of the *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy* the Magi are driven by the prophecy of Zoroaster about a king to be born and go to the East where they find the baby Jesus. After they *adored Jesus and presented their gifts to him,....In the same hour there appeared to them an angel in the form of that star which had before guided them on their journey taking them back to their own country.*

There are now scientifically-based arguments to support a unique formation of planets at about the time of Jesus' infancy. But, at that time, did the people consider the stars and planets to be physical bodies of matter that simply emanate light, or did stars and planets have more personalized powers and traits? I think that the Bible and literature from that time go heavily toward the latter. We are the ones who have clearly distinguished the parts of our universe distinctly apart from any human traits or characteristics. Then we have problems with the Pentagon spending \$22 million of its annual budget on the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (UFOs), but it still operates as military pilots continue to turn in photos of the mysterious objects they encounter all around the world?

It's sometimes hard for us to share space with "others", despite God having taken on human form as a baby in Bethlehem about 2000 years ago. But, I'm so glad it did happen! And I followed the light of witness to find him. I hope you have, too. And I hope you enjoy celebrating it to the greatest extent possible, giving thanks for God's great love!!!!

*Merry Christmas,
Pastor Mac*



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24 | 7:30 p.m.
@Montgomery Hills Baptist Church

*Thank
You!*

A tremendous heartfelt thanks to all of you who participated in the Christmas Toy Drive. Through your outpouring of generosity and unselfishness, we were able to provide gifts for the children of the clients we serve in the community through the weekly Food Closet Ministry.

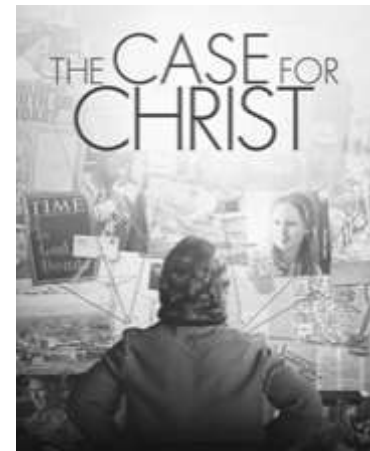


SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

@ 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



Attending? Please see Sara Reed after the Sunday Worship Service.



1. Serving allows us to discover and develop our spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12 compares the church to a human body. Just like our bodies are made of many parts serving specific functions, the church is made up of people with different skills and abilities. Alone these pieces aren't very useful, but together we create something beautiful.

2. Serving allows us to experience miracles. In John 2, Jesus was at a wedding and the couple was running out of wine for its guests. He tells the servants to fill several big jars to the brim. When they served the water to the guests, it was wine! The guests never knew what happened; the servants were the ones who witnessed the miracle. The same is true for us when we serve.

3. Serving allows us to experience the joy and peace that comes from obedience. 1 Peter 4:10-11 says, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms... so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." Serving is a form of worship, a way to express gratitude for what Jesus has done for us, and to share the love and grace we've been given.

4. Serving helps us to be more like Jesus. We shift our ourselves onto others through serving. We begin to see others as Jesus sees them. And we see Jesus IN others (Matthew 25:40).

5. Serving surrounds us with other Christians who can help us follow Jesus. When we're working side by side with other people, a bond inevitably forms. This was part of God's plan for how the church is supposed to work. That's why Hebrews 10:24-25 instructs us to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together... but encouraging one another."

6. Serving increases our faith. As we move out of our comfort zones, God increases our faith by revealing new potential — in ourselves and in His Church. When we see what He can do when His power is at work within us, we begin looking for the doors He's opening rather than pushing our way through the one's He's closed (Ephesians 3:20).

7. Serving allows us to experience God's presence in new ways. Encouragement and healing go hand in hand. As we encourage others and thank them, we're encouraged. It's the reason so many people who go on mission trips say they came home feeling like they got more than they gave.

How Can You Serve At FBC?

On the Thursday of each month from 5:00-7:30 p.m. come help the Young Adult Ministry by serving at Shepherd's Table in downtown Silver Spring - 8106 Georgia Avenue. **Our next scheduled serve date is January 4, 2018.** See Claire Giammaria or email her at clairegiammaria@gmail.com if you would like more information on helping in this ministry.

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

The following individuals will be celebrating birthdays. Bring an added smile to their special day by calling, sending an email, or mailing a card to wish them a very happy birthday. It will surely make their day that much brighter!

DECEMBER

24 Millie Flickinger 28 Sara Carrier
26 Florine Faulkner

JANUARY

2 DeAnna Browne 4 Mary Ann Drumwright
Carolyn Morris Robert Erdahl
3 Claire Giammaria Gareth Murray Sr



Building Fund Up date

Received December 17, 2017

\$ 7,655.00

Total Funds Received:

\$ 852,034.35

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.

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. We thank you in advance for helping us to keep our prayer list up to date.

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)

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.

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