

The orbits of the eight major planets when viewed edge-on.

The plane of the solar system is defined by the orbit of the Earth. By definition, it is the apparent path of the Sun as it moves from day to day with respect to the stars. This line in the sky is called the ecliptic. No orbits of the major planets deviate from the ecliptic plane by more than 7° . As viewed from the Earth, the planets can never be seen far away from the ecliptic. The major planets are always observed near this line, whether or not they are hidden by the Earth or by daylight. This “alignment” is guaranteed.

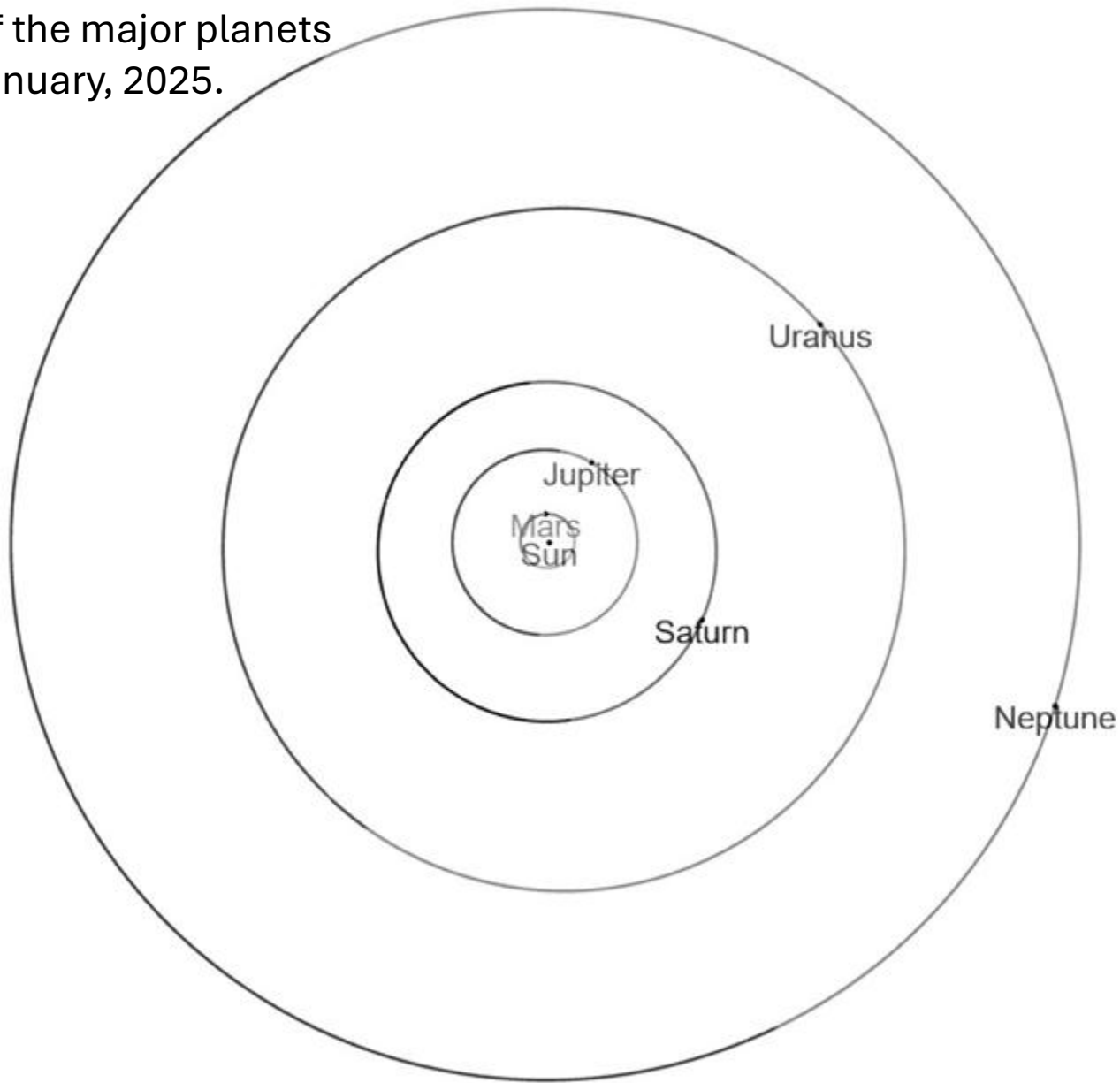
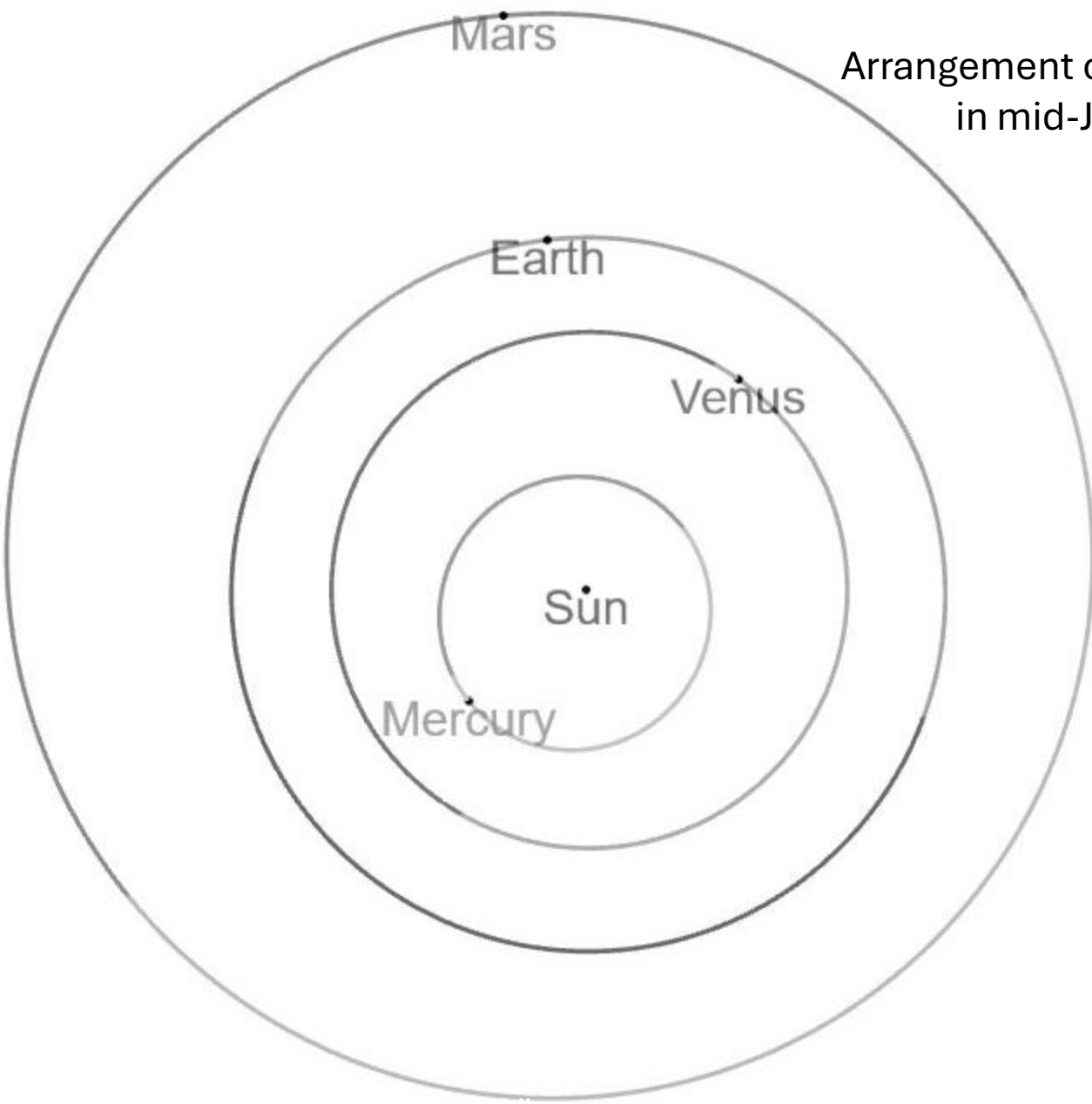


These “alignments” are not uncommon. It isn’t truly an alignment just because the angular distance between the planets is less than 180 degrees.

You can find an interactive model of the solar system here:

https://ssd.jpl.nasa.gov/tools/orbit_viewer.html

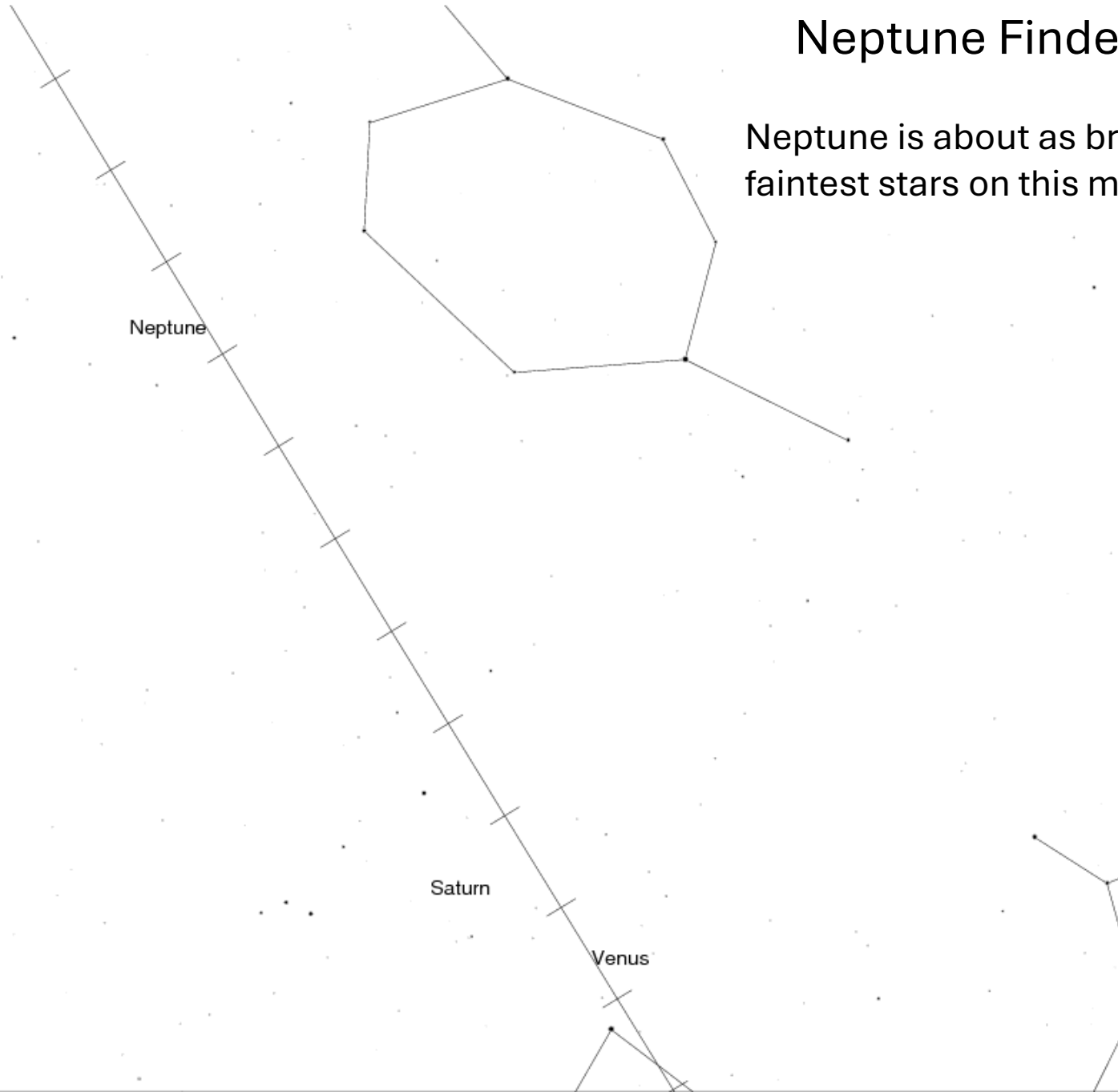
Arrangement of the major planets
in mid-January, 2025.



When viewed from above the ecliptic, there is no obvious alignment of planets.
The orientations of the inner and outer planets in these diagrams are the same.

Neptune Finder Chart

Neptune is about as bright as the faintest stars on this map.



Neptune

Saturn

Venus

Const Ln		
0	●	4
1	●	5
2	●	6
3	●	7



W 84.5038 deg N38.0339 deg
15 Jan 2025 18:43:52 EST