

## The Crescent Moon Sails by Venus and Saturn

On the nights of **January 2-4**, the waxing crescent Moon sails by the planets Venus and Saturn in the constellation Aquarius, the Water Carrier. Saturn is descending lower each night toward the western horizon – departing our evening skies in March and returning to our evening skies in late September. Meanwhile, Venus, our bright “evening star”, is ascending in our evening skies. The two planets will pass each other along the ecliptic on Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>.

The Moon orbits eastward, about  $13^\circ$  along the “ecliptic” (the path across the sky that the Sun, Moon, and planets appear to follow), from one day to the next, or about  $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$  per hour. This shift means Earth needs to rotate a little longer to bring the Moon into view, which is why moonrise is about 50 minutes later each day. On these cool winter evenings, try following this daily lunar movement across the sky.

