On January 4th, Wednesday, the Earth reaches “perihelion” - closest approach to the Sun for the year.

The word “perihelion” is from the Greek: “peri” meaning near and “helios” meaning Sun.

Earth is some 3 million miles closer (or one part in 30 closer) at perihelion than at the farthest point (aphelion) in its elliptical orbit in early July.

Yet we experience our coldest weather in the northern hemisphere during January.

It’s the Earth’s 23½° axial tilt combined with its orbital motion, not its distance from the Sun, that causes the seasons.

In January the northern hemisphere is pointed away from the warmth of the Sun.