

# Saint Mary's Newsletter: February

**Vicar:** David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

**Lay Minister:** Charles Clark 021 02691764

**Peoples Warden:** Sally-Ann Riddell 022 107562

**Vicars Warden:** John Heaton 021 702871



## SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY



### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>:

10am Candlemas Holy Communion Service

**Refreshments:** Sally-Ann

**Readings:** Charles

**Intercessions:** Sally-Ann

### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>:

10am Holy Communion Service

**Refreshments:** Trish

**Readings:** Charles

**Intercessions:** Trish

### Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>:

10am Holy Communion Service

**Refreshments:** Melanie

**Readings:** Charles

**Intercessions:** Melanie

### Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>:

10am Holy Communion service

**Refreshments:** TBA

**Readings:** Charles

**Intercessions:** TBA



**Refreshment Roster:** Please see the roster on the table near the church entrance, and fill in the spaces / dates that you can provide after service morning tea. The amount of people helping out on this roster has grown smaller, so we would really appreciate it if you would consider assisting if you are not already – ev

en once every couple of months or so would help. Being on the Refreshment roster does not mean you need to be on the readings or intercession part if you are not comfortable with that 😊



Don't forget St Mary's Gordonton is on Facebook: info, thoughts, & updates. Like it!

## Parish Giving

Please consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. St Mary's has to pay for our Vicar and all other costs of running a Parish, as well as giving a proportion to the Diocese. Please help us to be sustainable by giving via Automatic Payment. It is an easy way to give and is useful for the parish in running its budget. The Parish Bank Account is:

**02 0410 0103053 00**

## Vaping

Vaping is the inhalation of an aerosol into the lungs by means of a liquid-filled device such as an e-cigarette. The liquid to be heated and turned into vapor usually contains nicotine and a flavouring of some kind. Vaping has become increasingly common, especially among young adults. It is often seen as a less harmful alternative to smoking tobacco. However, as Christians, we are called to examine our actions through the lens of Scripture, seeking to align every aspect of our lives with God's will. While the Bible does not explicitly mention vaping, it provides clear principles that guide believers into wise decisions.

One of the most significant biblical teachings related to vaping is that the believer's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, the apostle Paul writes, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies." Our bodies belong to God. We are called to honour God by caring for and respecting the bodies He gave us. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, research into the health concerns of vaping are ongoing, but "emerging data suggests links to chronic lung disease and asthma. . . . You're exposing yourself to all kinds of chemicals that we don't yet understand and that are probably not safe" (Blaha, M. J., "5 Vaping Facts You Need to Know," [www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org), accessed 11/19/24). Deliberately engaging in activities that could harm our physical well-being is not good stewardship of the body God entrusted to us.

The Christian's pursuit of holiness includes cultivating self-control, a fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:23. The fluid used in vaping almost always contains nicotine, a highly addictive chemical. The Bible warns against behaviour's that can lead to addiction. In 1 Corinthians 6:12, Paul writes, "I have the right to do anything,' you say—but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything'—but I will not be mastered by anything." A critical issue is whether we allow ourselves to be "mastered" by anything. Are those who are addicted to nicotine in vaping pens or e-cigs being "mastered" by it? If so, then it is sin.

Finally, Christians are called to be a light to the world and to live in a way that points others to Christ. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Everything a Christian does should be done "for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Can a person vape for the glory of God? If not, then it is sin.

Our actions, both public and private, have the potential to influence others. If vaping becomes associated with addictive or harmful behaviour's, it can damage our witness to non-believers or cause fellow believers to stumble. In the matter of vaping, the believer should weigh the benefits and risks, consider the health warnings, bear in mind his or her personal testimony, and, above all, look to Christ. Then an informed, prayerful decision can be made. If a person is convicted that vaping is sinful, then it is time to put down the vape pen and, with God's help, leave the habit behind. Non-vaping brothers and sisters in Christ should help bear the burden (Galatians 6:2), eschewing judgmentalism and striving for grace



## This Month in Christian History:



Born in Picardy, St. Anskar was the apostle to the Scandinavians. He was educated at Corbie, a Benedictine monastery, and taught at Corvey, a daughter house in Westphalia. Louis I the Pious had at that time allied himself with Harald of Denmark in a dynastic dispute on the condition that Harald and his country become Christian. When Louis sought a missionary, Archbishop Ebbo of Rheims and Abbot Wala of Corvey recommended Anskar. His mission began c. 826 in Schleswig and ended the following year with Harald's defeat. Bjorn of Sweden later permitted Anskar to preach in Sweden, where he established the first church in Scandinavia at Björnskö. Louis named Anskar first bishop of Hamburg in 831, and the following year, Gregory IV appointed him papal legate to the Scandinavians. The Swedish mission collapsed in 845, after Vikings destroyed Hamburg. Appointed Archbishop of Bremen in 851, Anskar renewed his missionary work and converted Haarik II of Sweden. Anskar did as much as he could to alleviate the harsh conditions of the Viking slave trade. He also founded hospitals. The archbishop died on February 3, 865. He spent the night before in prayer for his mission. On the morning of his death, "he lifted up his hand and prayed that God in His goodness would forgive whoever had done him any wrong. Then he began to say over and over again the verses: 'According to Thy mercy think thou upon me, according to Thy goodness, O Lord,' [Ps 25: 6] and 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' (Luke 18:18) and 'Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.'" (Luke 23:46 ) When he could not speak for lack of breath, he ordered one of the brethren to continue saying the same words for him. "And so, with his eyes fixed on heaven, he breathed forth his spirit which had been commended to the grace of the Lord.