

Parish Church of **St. Barnabas, Swanland** *Sharing Christ through friendship.*  
 Small Group notes, w/beg. Sunday **1/11/15** (All Saints'). Readings: Heb. 12:18-24; Matt. 5:1-12  
*All Saints' Day – Saints: Holy people, sent to serve as 'citizens' of heaven*

<b>Welcome</b>	What images or names come to your mind when you hear the word 'saint'?
<b>Worship</b>	<p><i>Suggested songs: Songs of Fellowship: 96 Father in heaven; 180 Holiness unto the Lord; 293 Jesus, Jesus; 563 We are a chosen people; 700 Did you hear the mountains tremble?</i>  <i>(NB: 20 files containing about 30 newer songs are available to borrow from the office for groups)</i></p>
	<i>Sunday's 9am service is available to listen to on <a href="http://www.stbchurch.org.uk">www.stbchurch.org.uk</a> (click on the 'Downloads' tab)</i>
<b>Read</b> Hebrews 12:18-24	<p><i>We take a break from the Joseph story this week, but if you can, read Genesis chapters 47-48 over the next week or so.</i></p> <p>The writer to the Hebrews (<i>name not known, though it could well have been St Barnabas!</i>) draws a contrast between life under the old covenant, living under the Jewish law, represented by Mt Sinai, and life in the New Covenant, living as children of God, represented by Mt Zion (the holy/ heavenly city, Jerusalem).</p> <p>What differences are emphasised and why is the new covenant 'better'? How does he encourage believers to strengthen our participation in the 'fellowship of the saints'?</p> <p>The word 'saints' (<i>hagioi</i> in Greek) means literally 'holy ones', i.e. those set apart for God (without saying anything about their moral character). Does it help you to think of saints as being those who are "wholly" dedicated to God?          How important is it for 'holy' people to be also those who live upright lives?</p> <p>What examples of 'saintly' people do you look to as models for Christian living?</p>
<b>Read</b> Matthew 5:1-12	<p>Jesus gives a 'blueprint' for here living as saints (followers of Jesus), to go alongside the 'stained glass images' we may have. John Stott suggests that the first four 'beatitudes' (vv.3-6) are primarily about our orientation towards God, and the second four (vv.7-12), are primarily about our orientation towards others. Do you agree? How do the two 'halves' relate to each other?</p> <p>What do we do about Christians who don't reflect these 'attitudes to be' and so dishonour the gospel message?          What do we do when those people are us?</p> <p>Read out slowly each of the eight 'blessed are..' phrases from vv.2-10 in turn: use this to pray as a group that each may reflect these beatitudes in their lives.          Then read out the eight 'for they...' phrases in turn and spend time thanking God for the blessings of being citizens of his kingdom.  <i>Remember: 'St.' is pronounced 'snt' (does that sound a bit like 'sent'?!?)</i></p>
<b>Witness</b>	<p><b>Pray</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ for your mission link person(s) or project</li> <li>❖ for opportunities this week to bring blessing and change to others as citizens and agents of God's kingdom</li> <li>❖ for opportunities to invite people to forthcoming events – e.g. the two Remembrance Day services next Sunday – and start thinking about events in December and beyond.</li> </ul>