Parish Church of **St. Barnabas, Swanland** *Sharing Christ through friendship*. Small Group notes.
W/beg. Sunday **15/11/15** (2 before Advent). Readings: Genesis 50:1-8, 14-21; Mark 8:27-33
Joseph: 'By the grace of God' (7) – God meant it for good

Welcome

Take a moment to 'pray for Paris' – in whatever way you can (you might like to use silence, or a candle, or one of the prayers at www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship).

Worship

Suggested songs: Songs of Fellowship: 89 Faithful One; 381 Make me a channel; 423 O Lord hear my prayer; 429 O Lord the clouds are gathering; 1193 Blessed be your name.
(NB: 20 files containing about 30 newer songs are available to borrow from the office for groups)

Sunday's sermon is available to listen to on www.stbchurch.org.uk (click on 'downloads')
This is the last episode in the Joseph 'saga', looking back at the whole story from the perspective of Jacob's death and Joseph's acceptance of his brothers' apology.

Read

Genesis 50:1-8; 14-21

Take a few moments to allow each person who would like to share one thing you have learned from looking at the story of Joseph over the last few weeks.

vv.1-8. The story sees the fulfilment of Joseph's (and Jacob's) dreams and of God's covenant promises to his people. Three areas of fulfilment can be identified: the individual (Joseph and his personal success), relational (a family being reconciled) and the global (God saving Israel and the nations from famine).
Where does the main interest lie for most people? Why all the detail about Jacob's burial here? Where does the narrator place his emphasis?
(for interest, look back at 49:33 – how do you understand the phrase 'gathered to his people'?)

vv.14-21. Some interesting questions arise here. It is 17 years since Joseph's father and 11 brothers came to live with him in Egypt – do you think he or they had told Jacob the true story of how he had come to be there? If not, why not?
Did the brothers make up this message from Jacob (up to the first half of v.17)? If not, was Joseph weeping at just their words in the second half of v.17? Why/ why not?

'Please forgive' (v.17b) – is it significant that Joseph forgave his brothers (see ch.45) long before they asked for his forgiveness? Did his earlier forgiveness prompt their repentance? Why is it important to forgive others even when they don't repent (see Mt. 5:23-24; 18:21-22; 6:15)

Mk. 8:27-33

'God meant / intended it for good' (v.20). How was Joseph able to say this after all he had been through? Can we still assert this about bad things that have happened to us? How does the reading from Mark show the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to be the supreme example of this? NB in v.31 twice Jesus says he 'must' suffer and die.
In these passages we see again God's "greater plan" in the lives of both Joseph and Jesus. Can this help us come to terms with the appalling events in Paris this weekend?

Witness

Pray

❖ for all those suffering as a result of war or terror, especially in recent days
❖ for assurance for those experiencing 'humbling' – that they will experience God 'lifting them up', and will in time see that he 'meant it for good' (see Rom. 8:28).
❖ for forthcoming events over Advent/ Christmas – 'Simply Christmas' craft evening (virtually sold out), Christmas Dinner, 'Mistletoe and Wine' and 'Beauty and the Beast' on 10 January – and opportunities to invite friends/ family to these.