

**Worship Material**  
**A new focus**  
**Material from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Lord God,  
we come with our love seeking your love afresh.  
We come with our questions seeking your guidance.  
We come with our certainties seeking your challenge.  
We come with our sinfulness seeking your forgiveness.  
So come, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and be  
whatever you need to be to us today.  
**Amen.**

**Read Colossians 3:1-11**

**Bible notes**

Paul invites his hearers to look beyond everyday realities to the life hidden with Christ in God. This change of focus takes them into the presence of the risen Christ, seated at God's right hand (cf Psalm 110:1). They can access this new reality only because they are baptized. They have died with Christ in the symbolic drowning of immersion in the water of baptism. Now, rescued from the water, they share new life with Christ, looking towards God and so seeing the world from Christ's perspective. They are a new creation (cf 2 Corinthians 5:17), able to inhabit a world where the risen Christ is fully present.

In baptism, they have received the Holy Spirit, the gift of God's grace. This is what enables them to away the major social divisions of the Roman Empire and makes it clear that nothing matters so much as our new being in Christ. The community of the Church transcends the social divisions of its day to create a transnational family united in Christ. move on from the sins of the past into new life. Paul reminds them of the new resources available to support them in changing the way they live, so that their focus on the risen Christ makes real differences to their lifestyle. This new life is not yet fully revealed, so Paul's hearers need support in making life choices as they move on from their Gentile past. The list of sins in verse 5 is similar to that found elsewhere in the New Testament and other writings, suggesting a shared view that Gentiles

needed particular encouragement to avoid sins relating to sexuality and idolatry (cf Romans 1:22-25, where sexual immorality is understood as a consequence of idolatry).

A baptized believer's new identity is centred on Christ. In language paralleled elsewhere in his letters (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28), Paul sweeps

### **Prayer**

**God** of all we have been, of all we are and of all we can be,  
you give each of us value, a unique identity  
and a common purpose.

You give each of us opportunities and call us by name.

We offer you our lives afresh to live as your people in the world,  
sharing your perspectives and passion for all you have made.

In Jesus' name, we praise you.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer to conclude**

As we go, Lord, please help us to look up,  
seeking the things that honour and please you,  
letting go of the things that damage us and others,  
clothed with Christ-likeness,  
to live and work to your praise and glory.

**Amen.**