

## Suggested songs

416 There's a wideness in God's mercy  
298 Christ the Lord is risen today  
367 When I was lost you came and rescued me  
693 Beauty for brokenness  
372 Come down O love divine  
652 Lord we ask for your healing  
74 For the music of creation (fits Ellan Vannin tune)  
21 Born in song  
668 Teach me my God and King

## Prayers

Adoration: MWB p.28 A  
Confession: MWB p.30 B  
Intercession: MWB p.35 B  
Dismissal: MWB p.38 A

## Gospel Reading

Luke 12.22-34

## Children's activity

Use a variety of types of large paper (wrapping paper, newspaper, tissue paper, etc.) and sellotape to make an item of clothing for someone in the church. Explain that it is to represent one the things we are told to put on in the passage: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, or patience.



**30 DAYS IN**

**[COLOSSIANS]**

**3**

## Thoughts

[Make sure that everyone has a copy of the text in front of them - either in a Bible, or use the sheet.]

This week we are going to look at part of the middle section of the letter to the Colossians. Paul's letters typically switch part way through, from teaching doctrine, to giving advice on how to live well. This switch happens here. We're going to call the author Paul, though in reality it might have been written by one of his associates. We are going to focus on seven aspects of the letter.

1. The Greek philosopher Plato came up with a story to explain one of his main ideas. Imagine some people who have lived inside a cave all their life. On the back wall of the cave they can see moving, dark shapes. They give names to these shapes and think that they are real. What they don't know is that just outside the cave real people are walking past casting these shadows; there is another, richer level of reality. In **verse 2.17** Paul borrows the idea of Plato's cave - he was very good at using things from secular popular culture to make Christian points. Here, he claims that the religious rituals that some people in Colossae regarded as vital are mere shadows of the deeper reality, Christ.

**Reflection:** is there a risk of attaching more value to religious rites than to God?

2. In **verse 2.20** Paul reminds us that when we were baptised we died; died to the 'elemental spirits of the universe'. That phrase is quite hard to unpack today, we don't really know what he meant! Perhaps it means the social conventions of the world. Things like: Charity begins at home. Money makes you happy. Look after number one.

**Reflection:** what other social conventions can you think of?

3. Continuing the theme of what it means to be baptised, once we have symbolically died in the water, we are risen to a new existence. Paul describes it in **verse 3.3** as our lives being 'hidden in Christ'. There is a sense of being incorporated into the Godhead, as amazing and unlikely as that sounds.

**Reflection:** what do you think it means to have your life hidden in Christ?

4. **Verse 3.6** talks about the 'wrath of God' coming to people who are disobedient. This is an interesting phrase - it is the only time in a letter of Paul that wrath is associated with God. In **Hosea 11** we have a different understanding of wrath:

*My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.*

*I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim;*

*for I am God and no mortal,*

*the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.*

**Reflection:** do you think that God is wrathful? How do we reconcile these alternative Biblical viewpoints?

5. In the early church, when people were baptised they took off their old clothes, went into the water naked, and were given new clothes when they emerged. Paul uses this theme between **verses 3.9-3.14**, talking about the clothes we have to discard and the ones we have to put on.

**Reflection:** are there any of Paul's 'old clothes' that you need to take off, or 'new clothes' that you need to put on?

6. In **verse 3.11** Paul claims that there are no divisions between people on the basis of their ethnicity, religion, sophistication, status. We are all the same since we have been raised anew in Christ.

**Reflection:** do you fully realise this, or do you still think of some people as 'foreign'?

7. Finally, in **verse 3.16** we are encouraged to sing to God with heartfelt gratitude. The exact meaning of the different types of song mentioned has been lost in time.

**Reflection:** what do you think the differences are between psalms, hymns and spiritual songs? Do typical worship services here include all of them?