The LINK

OCTOBER 2023



The Parish Church of St Michael Braintree www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

OCTOBER UPDATE

Dear Friends,

I wanted to update you about some special events happening in October, in addition to our regular groups, services and events.

For those with **children under 3**, we now have a **crèche**, which meets in the main hall of Church House, during our 10am services. Please bring all of your children & young people into church for 10am (including crèche aged children) – we have a short time all together, before the children & young people (0-14 years) go out to their Junior Church groups and crèche.

On Sat 7th Oct we have a church quiz, in Church House.

On **Sat 14th Oct, 10am-1pm**, there is a **coffee morning** in Church House, in aid of the Operation Christmas Child shoebox appeal. The coffee morning is for anyone, male or female, and will include a sale of pre-loved ladies & children's clothes & accessories.

The Men@StMichael's are having a meal at the Toby Carvery, at Notley Cross on Tues 17th Oct from 7pm.

On Sat 28th Oct, 3-5pm, there will be a SMASH Extra for Families Light Party in church.

Details of all of these events, and other things that are happening, will be on the weekly Notice Sheet. I hope you will be able to join us for some of these things.

Wishing you every blessing,

Nigel



MISSION OF THE MONTH SAMARITAN'S PURSE

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD - SHOEBOX TIME!

For the second year running, Operation Christmas Child is celebrating a milestone. Last year they surpassed 200 million shoebox gifts collected worldwide since the project began in 1993!

This year 35 million children around the world have been discipled through classes that originated with OCC. That's 35 million children growing up guided by biblical principles and scriptures. That's over half the number of souls in England. But many more need to be reached, some of whom live in remote, hard to reach places where the Name of Jesus may have never been heard.

Samaritan's Purse partners with local churches and volunteers across the globe and boxes are distributed to children regardless of background. The shoeboxes give children a present, perhaps in some cases the first present that they have ever received! This is a practical way of showing God's love to children and each box represents a "Gospel opportunity"-a chance to introduce a boy or girl to the Lord Jesus. Children are invited to take part in The Greatest Journey discipleship classes. This includes 12 lessons taught by trained local volunteer teachers.

Last year nearly 400,000 shoeboxes were handed out in the besieged country of Ukraine. One ministry partner in Ukraine said, "The children try to cover their emotions, but we can see that they are desperately wounded in their souls. The most important thing is seeing the children receive Jesus as Saviour."

How to pack a shoebox

Step 1: Find a shoebox. Ideally find a standard sized shoebox and wrap the box and lid separately in colourful wrapping paper. Alternatively use a pre-printed shoebox, no need to wrap! There are 50 pre-printed Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes available in church. Attach the boy/girl label, also available in church in the How to Pack a Shoebox leaflet. Mark if your gift is for a boy or girl and select an age category the gift is for: 2-4 years, 5-9 years or 10-14 years.

Step 2: Fill with gifts!

Toys: This can include a soft/cuddly toy or a doll, toy cars, small musical instruments, yo-yos, skipping rope, balls (a deflated football with a pump can be included) or small puzzle.

School Supplies & Creative Activities: E.g. pens, pencils, sharpeners, crayons, felt tip pens, fun stamps with ink pad sets, notebooks or colouring books, solid paint palette and brushes, stickers or stencils, solar calculator.

Hygiene Items: E.g. toothbrush, bars of wrapped soap, comb or hairbrush, flannel or sponge.

Other Items/Accessories: E.g. Hat, gloves, scarf, sunglasses, cap, socks, t-shirt or hair accessories, bracelets, watches or torches.

Home Crafted Items: E.g. knitted hats, gloves or scarf, bags etc.

Please do not include: Toothpaste, sweets, chocolate or gum; seeds or food items; lotions and liquids; used or damaged items; war related items; religious or political literature; medicines, aerosol cans, sharp or fragile items.

Step 3: Personalise and Pray. Include a personal note (optional). This could include a Christmas card, note or greeting, photo of yourself or family. Most importantly pray for the child who will receive your gift.

Step 4: **Donate £5 per box**, this covers shipping and other project costs. For easiest processing you can give online or give by cheque or cash using the pre-paid envelope which is also available in the **How to Pack a Shoebox leaflet** in church. If you use the Follow Your Box feature online, you can also discover the destination of your shoebox.

Step 5: Drop off your box in church by Sunday 12th November 2023, after which they will be taken to the nearest collection centre.

National collection week for 2023 is 13th-20th November.

For additional gift suggestions and more, visit: Samaritans-purse.org.uk/OCC

I'd like to help but can't fill a box.

No problem! Donations of any of the above items (fillers) that go into boxes are always welcome. Please put them in the box labelled donations by the Operation Christmas Child stand at the back of church. We will make up some 'church boxes' from these and any surplus items will be taken to the processing centre along with the completed shoeboxes. Some donations are used there to help fill up other boxes where needed. Monetary gifts are always welcome to aid with transport costs and other expenses.

If you are not able to donate a shoebox in person, did you know that you can also pack a Shoebox Online? This costs £20 which includes £5 for transport.

For more information go to Samaritans-purse.org.uk/SBO

For your online shoebox donations this year we have set up an online goal page for our St Michael's church members. We have set a goal of 25 online shoebox donations. If you can help us reach that goal that would be fantastic!

The link is below.

https://shoeboxonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk/goal-pages/d1475aeb

Thank you for your generous support of Operation Christmas Child.

Sue Marriott - St Michael's rep for Samaritan's Purse

"ISN'T THAT THOMPSON'S BOY?"

A well-to-do couple were leaving Covent Garden Opera House. He was dressed in top hat and tails and she in a long evening dress as befitted the upper classes of the late nineteenth century.

THEY WERE RIGHT

The young man in the gutter was 'Thompson's Boy' – his name was Francis. He had left home to become a medical student, but had a problem with alcohol abuse and drug addiction. He was sleeping on the streets.

TAKEN HOME

The couple from the opera took him home, cleaned him up, gave him a bed, and helped him regain his self-respect. More than that, they helped him on the path back to his Christian faith. He was brought up as a Roman Catholic. Reflecting later on his rescue and how God became real to him, he wrote a poem called 'THE HOUND OF HEAVEN'.

'I fled him down the nights and down the days
I fled him down the arches of the years.....'

These are the opening lines of poem. He sees himself running away from God. God is like hound pursuing his quarry. Reflecting on his fall from his medical studies and his destitution, he felt he was running from God. But God did not give up the chase.

'I AM HE WHOM THOU SEEKEST....'

These are almost the last words of the poem. They could be Thompson saying, 'you Lord God have taken hold of me at last'. He could be saying something like 'you have found me and restored

me, and I am glad.' On the other hand, the words most likely have the sense that God is saying, 'I have found you.' Many Christians have come to see that in their search for God, strangely, God found them.

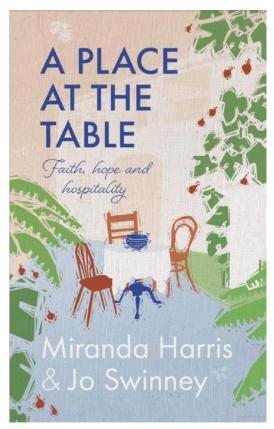
WORTHWHILE

Folk have found that in their trying to find Jesus Christ, He was pursing them. They have found it a heart-warming exercise to trace the ways that Jesus Christ has led them to Himself, and, when they have fallen away, restored them.

Stephen Bailey

A PLACE AT THE TABLE - RECOMMENDED READING

Hopefully October is not too early to start thinking about Christmas (sorry!) but this is a book I have found thought provoking and practical and it would make a great Christmas present for some lucky person. Amazon sell the book, but also you can get it direct from A Rocha by going to their website.



A Place at the Table is a series short chapters drawn from Miranda Harris' diaries and contributions from Jo Swinney (her daughter). Miranda with husband Peter, founded A Rocha in 1983 and was sadly killed in a car crash in 2019.

Here are some thoughts on the book.

At a time when loneliness and isolation have reached unprecedented levels, it has never been more important for Christians to embrace the practice of

hospitality. For many, it is a lost art – a practice we have forgotten, neglected or distorted beyond all recognition. Amid material comforts and rife individualism, practising hospitality can often hold unrealistic expectations and insurmountable pressure. But what if the practice of hospitality was simpler and yet more profound than we imagined?

From the simple act of preparing vegetables to the warm welcome of a stranger, co-authors Miranda Harris and her daughter Jo Swinney re-define hospitality for the modern age. Drawing on biblical insights and a deep well of experience – most significantly within the community in the A Rocha family – this is

a warm invitation to embrace the loving kindness of others. To be hospitable doesn't require culinary excellence or matching cutlery – it doesn't even require a home of one's own, true hospitality offers a welcome into imperfection and messiness, a place to belong and be embraced.

Following the progression of a meal, from its planning to the moment every guest has departed, *A Place at the Table* is a heartwarming invitation into a life of thoughtful food preparation, shared meals and meaningful conversation.

Ann Mahood

FARMING SEASONS

This month we return to the Emerald Isle for an update from lan Irvine and the County Antrim dairy farm.

It is five months since our last article, and much has happened in that time. We came through our annual TB (Tuberculosis) test successfully, albeit with a few bumps in the road along the way. We delivered just over 110 newborn calves from the dairy herd, and we have seen local weather records smashed. June was our hottest since records began before July ended up breaking the record for the most rainfall ever recorded at this time of year.

In springtime our main concerns were the falling milk prices and worrying about if the weather would behave for the upcoming first cut of silage. In the end, both May and June turned out to be quite glorious. Endless sunshine paired with those record-breaking temperatures meant we were able to comfortably gather in an excellent first cut of the season.



The crucial second cut however, couldn't have been more different. Ready to start cutting at the very start of July, things did not go to plan as the weather took a turn for the worse. The rain arrived and stayed until halfway through August putting us over 7 weeks behind. When we did finally cut, the grass was so long and so wet that it forced the dry matter percentage down considerably. This means we are resigned to losing valuable nutrients and sugars from the crop through seepage in the silo.

What news on the milk price? Unfortunately, as feared, the price has continued to fall. In our last update the average farmgate price for Northern Ireland dairy farmers was £0.40 pence per litre, now the average price is just under £0.28 pence per litre. Bleak news indeed. The question for all dairy farmers is simple, how long can they survive operating at such a loss? Time will reveal all, but we certainly hope and pray the trend bucks quickly.

With summer now behind us and autumn well and truly underway, many people will be looking forward to Harvest Sunday. This has always been a calendar highlight for me, as we often get to sing one of my favourite hymns, 'We Plough the Fields and Scatter'. Harvest Sunday provides an opportunity for congregations to donate food to those who need it most, as well as giving thanks and praise to the Lord for His provision. It is a time to thank our farmers and acknowledge the hugely important role they have in the never-ending cycle of feeding our nation.

lan Irvine

FORGIVENESS

Thoughts from an essay by CS Lewis "On forgiveness as a necessary practice" (1947)

We talk about forgiveness in and out of Church without really thinking about what it means in practice. We say, as Jesus taught us, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us", and in the Creed "I believe in the forgiveness of sins". Why do we say this in the Creed? If we are all Christians then of course we believe in the forgiveness of sins, don't we? But perhaps we need to say these sentences, in Church and privately, to remind ourselves of this aspect of our faith which is not as easy to put into practice as we might think.

Jesus' teaching is absolutely clear; if we don't forgive others we shall not be forgiven. He does not mean that our sins and those of others can be forgiven provided that they are not too frightful, too often repeated, or brought about by extenuating circumstances. There are no exceptions: if we can't forgive others then we cannot be forgiven ourselves.

We can often confess our own sins and ask for help in forgiving the sins of others something like this:

"O Lord, I shouldn't have said that. I was tired, stressed about something else altogether etc etc." or

"O Lord, I was hurt by what was said to me. Perhaps they didn't realize what they were doing, didn't mean it etc etc."

What we are really asking God to do then is to accept our excuses. **Excusing is the opposite of forgiveness.**

There are two ways to avoid this:

- ➤ God knows all the real excuses much better than we do. If there are genuine extenuating circumstances then God won't overlook them, and will take them into account. What we have to do is to take to God the actual sin at the heart of it all.
- ➤ We are anxious to find excuses for ourselves and others because we can't quite believe that God will take us to Himself, even if we can't make out a convincing case. What we have to do is to take to God the actual sin at the heart of it all.

(Of course we can be much more lenient over our own failings, than those of others!)

My examples might then read:

"O Lord, I shouldn't have spoken as I did. I lost my temper. I am sorry. Please forgive me". Or

"O Lord, I have been hurt by some people. Please help me to forgive them, and not to bear them a grudge".

Real forgiveness means looking steadily at the basic sin that has been committed. To be a Christian is to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in us. We need to remind ourselves of God's promise frequently as we go about our daily lives.

CS Lewis summarizes how forgiveness works in this way:

"Forgiveness says: Yes, you have done this thing, but I accept your apology. I will never hold it against you, and everything between us two will be exactly as it was before".

To refuse forgiveness to others is to refuse God's mercy for ourselves. There are no exceptions.

Afterthought: Supreme examples of asking God's forgiveness for others are Jesus' words from the cross "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), or Stephen's words as he was being stoned to death "Lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). Given similar circumstances would we be able to say the same?

Barbara Wells

CASHLESS GIVING



Please talk to the Wardens or Treasurer if you would prefer to use your debit/credit card as an alternative to the cash offertory. The machine is easy to use and can be found on the table by the South Door.

Questions and answers

1. Is the device secure?

SumUp uses the PCI PTS (Payment Card Industry PIN Transaction Security) standard for their device in order to handle a customer's PIN. In addition, SumUp is PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard) approved.

Both the PCI PTS and the PCI DSS certifications are managed by the card brands and administered by the Payment Card Industry Security Standards Council. The standard was created to reduce fraud and certifies a business's ability to abide by the highest security standards available.

SumUp is also an FCA-approved entity.

2. How to use SumUp

- a. Tap the device and enter the amount you wish to contribute
- **b.** The next screen will ask for your name (if you wish to remain anonymous please ignore). Should we have your Gift Aid details it is useful for us to know who you are as we can claim 25p in the £ for your donation.
- c. The next screen asks if you would like an email receipt.

- d. The final screen accepts your donation.
- **e.** Your card statement will show "SumUp St Michaels, Braintree" and the amount.

3. Why are we offering this service?

- a. This is a secure way of making payments to us not just for an offering but, for example; paying for Quiz night tickets; meal out and so on. (If this is the case please make it clear against your name e.g. L Davey – Quiz Night.)
- **b.** As we seem to be moving to a cashless environment, it seemed sensible to join in!

4. Will it cost the Church?

a. There is a very small charge to us but it is not at all onerous.

St Michaels Church

AN ANGLICAN QUIZ

Sourced from "Ready to Harvest" you tube channel www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYZ_qV6p5pg - Supplied by David Birch

- 1. What is the name of this service book for Anglican churches which contains the liturgies among other things?
- 2. In 1534 the Church of England renounced papal Authority who the English king at the time?
- 3. What is the most senior Bishop in the Church of England called?
- 4. Who was the Archbishop of Canterbury during the separation from the papacy?
- 5. The book of common prayer contains a list of articles that historically defined Anglicanism how many articles are there?
- 6. The Anglican communion holds a gathering of worldwide Bishops every 10 years convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury what is this meeting called?
- 7. What is the largest American Anglican denomination called?
- 8. What is the name of the Anglican writer and lay Theologian who wrote The Chronicles of Narnia?
- 9. What is the name of the Bible translation that was translated entirely by members of the Church of England and first published in 1611.
- 10. What is the second largest Anglican denomination worldwide after the church of England and larger when considering only active members?

- 11. Who is the most recent U.S president to be an Anglican while in office?
- 12. What is the name of the Anglican priest born in 1703 who led a Revival movement instead of his conversion experience that his heart was strangely warmed?
- 13. As of 2023 who is the Archbishop of Canterbury?
- 14. What is the name of the Evangelistic course developed at Holy Trinity Brompton in 1977 and now used in churches and denominations around the world?
- 15. What is the name of the Anglican cleric and Evangelical leader author of bestseller 'Basic Christianity' who died in 2011 and was named by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2005?
- 16. What is the title for a priest who has primary administrative pastoral and liturgical responsibilities in a parish or congregation?
- 17. What is the name of the Anglican Church which has been the location of the coronation of 39 British monarchs and at least 16 Royal weddings?
- 18. Who preceded Justin Welby as the Archbishop of Canterbury?
- 19. What is the name of the Anglican communion denomination in Scotland?
- 20. What is the name of the conference first held in 2008 by conservative Bishops and primates of Anglicanism to address divisions in the Anglican communion?

Answers on page 30



WALK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE



Join us on Saturday, 28th October for our walk in the countryside - a walk around Green Dragon. David Birch will be our guide.

Everyone is welcome to join in - just turn up! *Please meet/gather at St Michael's Church Car Park at 10.00am to set-off at 10.10am.* The walk will be around 3-4 miles. There may be an opportunity for refreshments at the Green Dragon Pub. Speak to David Birch or Ade Odupitan for more information. Lifts can be arranged if required.

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE ROSES!

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

An ancient story is told of the Queen of Sheba. She sent two wreaths of roses to Solomon, one real and one artificial, to test his reputed wisdom. She defied him to detect the genuine from the artificial. Solomon at once directed that some bees be brought into the room and of course, they immediately flew to the real flowers and thought nothing of the counterfeit.

So it is with us as believers. When we find ourselves overwhelmed, surrounded, being attacked from every side with the bees of revile and persecution, it simply means they recognise that we are the real deal! Our beautiful aroma attracts those scary bees but the Lord, in the end, says, "Where, [oh bees], is your sting?!"

Rejoice when the bees come around! Don't lose heart! God has the victory!

Supplied from "The Worthy Brief" by Peter Schaad

DO YOU HAVE A LITTLE TIME TO SPARE? TRY THIS FOR YOURSELF: TEN MINUTE DIY BIBLE STUDY

When sorting through the large quantity of my dear late husband Tom's papers, I have come across, (and stored away for the family), hundreds of the prompt cards which Tom produced each time he preached a sermon. It occurred to me that many of these sermon outlines might make good aids for anyone wishing to spend a short time on Bible study at home. So here is a prompt sheet which I discovered being used as a bookmark.

The original sermon was preached at the little chapel at Crix Green, near Felsted, at a 10.00am service on 8th January 2012. Tom would have used the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible in his preparation, but with this passage from John's first letter, you shouldn't have any problems whichever version you have. Ask the Lord to show you something good from His word; read through the passage; then go through it verse by verse and think about the points which Tom noted. May God bless you in it!

Margaret St John-Coleman
1,John 1:1-7

V1 From the BEGINNING the WORD of life (John 1:1)

v2 MANIFESTED ETERNAL life

V3. we DECLARE unto you

V4. JOY! (This word is circled for emphasis)

V5. MESSAGE Light. No darkness at all.

v7. DESTINY by the BLOOD of Jesus Christ: clean from all sin

Walk in the LIGHT

COFFEE CHAT WITH ROGER COOKE



Third Monday coffee and conversation

I shall be in the Quadrant cafe on **Monday 16th October** at **10.30am** so if you'd like to join me you'd be very welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you.

Roger Cooke



BELFRY BULLETIN

We have held a successful Northern District Advanced Practice at St. Michael's on Saturday 16th September. Eleven members of the advanced group representing 6 District towers took part as we rang 9 different methods making a very enjoyable and productive evening.

We were very pleased to welcome Jenny and Mike Hastings to the Tower to ring for the morning service on Sunday 17th September. Jenny and Mike were Guild members many years ago and it great to ring with them again.

We were also pleased to welcome Maurice Downs back to the tower following his eye operation. It was good to see Maurice.

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

Bradley was invited to join the Essex Association's 10 bell competition band. On 9th September Bradley was in the band that was placed a very creditable 4th in the Essex Trophy held at St. Mary's Walthamstow, with Southern County Associations teams taking part.

Peter rang 2 Quarter Peals with the Golden Oldies at Hemingford Grey on 12th September. Unfortunately, 1 was false. Ashtead Surprise Major and a false Stedman Triples. The next day 13th he rang a QP of Bourne Surprise Minor at Hatfield Heath.

Peter Smith

OCTOBER DIARY

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Our YouTube services can be accessed through the "St Michael's – Worship on the Web" YouTube channel and are generally updated during the week after the Sunday service

1 Sunday

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Church Family Worship followed by a Picnic (Church

House/Garden)

4:00pm Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

6:30pm Evening Worship

2 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

4 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point

5 Thursday

10-12noon Coffee@StMichael's in church

7 Saturday

5:45pm St Michael's Church Quiz with Fish/Sausage & Chips

8 Sunday

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Morning Worship - Crosslinks Mission Sunday

6:30pm Holy Communion

9 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

10 Tuesday

1:15 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

8.00-9.00pm First Priority Prayer Meeting

11 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point

12 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

14 Saturday

10:00am – 1:00pm Women@StMichaels – Coffee Morning; Sale of pre-loved women's & children's clothes, in aid of Operation Christmas Child Appeal – Men & women welcome

15 Sunday

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm All-Age Tonight

16 Monday

10:30am Coffee Chat with Roger Cooke @Quandrant

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

17 Tuesday

1:15 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

7:00pm Men@StMichaels - Meal @Toby Carvery, Notley Cross

19 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

21 Saturday

9:00am Church Work Party - Leaf drop gutter clearance/tidy

22 Sunday

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Morning Worship

6:30pm Holy Communion

23 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

26 Thursday

2:00pm Oasis@StMichaels: informal bereavement support

group (Small Hall)

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

28 Saturday

10:00am Walk in the Countryside (Green Dragon)

3:00pm SMASH Extra for Families Light Party

7:30pm Braintree Male Voice Choir & Hedingham Singers (@St

Paul's Church, Braintree)

29 Sunday

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Morning Worship

6:30pm Evening Worship

30 Monday

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

31 Tuesday

1:15 - 2:45pm Tiddlywinks

Quiz Answers:

- 1. The Book of Common Prayer
- 2. King Henry VII
- 3. The Archbishop of Canterbury
- 4. Thomas Cranmer
- *5. 39.*
- 6. Lambeth conference
- 7. The Episcopal Church
- 8. CS Lewis
- 9. The King James version or authorized version
- 10. The Church of Nigeria
- 11. George H.W. Bush he was a member of the Episcopal Church
- 12. John Wesley who remained an Anglican his whole life but his Methodist movement would later split from the church
- 13. Justin Welby
- 14. Alpha course
- 15. John Stott
- 16. Rector or vicar, or a lesser-known title: incumbent
- 17. Westminster Abbey
- 18. Rowan Williams
- 19. The Scottish Episcopal Church
- 20. The Global Anglican Future Conference or GAFCON

