

The

Chronicle

Summer 2022

The Magazine of Goring United Reformed Church



We are here to worship God and proclaim the love of Jesus Christ to all

GORING UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

- We share a minister with Sompting United Reformed Church -

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Sunday Worship in the Sanctuary

10.30am Morning worship - with Holy communion on first Sunday in month.

All services at 10:30am are live streamed and recorded for later viewing on our website <https://www.gurc.net/> and our YouTube channel.



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Front Cover:

[Mérida Cathedral in the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico](#)

Photo taken by Alison Westcott

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Queen Elizabeth II
70 Years of Glorious Reign



Disclaimer: Whilst great care is taken to accurately reproduce articles presented for the Chronicle, mistakes sometimes do occur. Please note that the views expressed in the following pages are not necessarily those of Goring United Reformed Church.

From the Manse

Rev Andrew Sellwood



SUMMER HOLIDAYS

I remember when I was young there was always a summer special edition of the comic I liked to read. It was an exciting time. As soon as the bumper edition comic was in the shops then summer had really begun. In 1963, D.C. Thomson of Dundee, publishers of the successful Dandy and Beano 'humour weeklies' as they were known, put together an oversized 'combo' of the two titles for the lucrative Summer Holiday market. A huge success, this ground-breaking edition started a tradition of Summer Specials that carry on to this day. I actually had the first one! Probably worth a bit now if I had kept it. I suppose they were designed to entertain children on long family drives to holiday destinations in the UK. Not many people I knew went on foreign holidays back then, far too exotic. There was one adventurous lad I remembered who went to Spain with his family. He came home with some kind of stomach bug and sun burn and tales of eating strange unidentifiable food. I think back with fond memories to our 10-day breaks on the Norfolk Broads. Of course, back then the sun shone every single day, never a cloud in the sky. Not a care in the world. Was that really true? Since those times I have been fortunate to visit some amazing places around the world and see how fantastic God's creation is. But when we are fortunate to go on holiday or have a bit of a getaway break, we inevitably come back to reality. Sometimes it is with a real jolt we can't escape it however hard we try.

As you read or hear the news you can't help noticing that we are all currently experiencing an unavoidable global reminder that life is uncertain and perhaps we are not as in control as we'd like to believe. I don't even know what state the world will be in when you get to read this. Things change from week to week. Change on all levels is inevitable. We can't stay in the past. Change threatens the idea we as individuals have some kind of control over events.

We can't deny there have been problems brewing for many years – but people haven't been attuned to them or perhaps they chose to ignore them, within our churches and in the wider world. However, the uncertain, uncontrollable nature of life is undisputable. Our only way forward as Christians must be to acknowledge the situation and turn to God. To make any difference is going to require a huge amount of creativity, compassion, and patience at the global level. But it all starts with us.

It seems that overall, humanity's reaction to life's events are guided by two sets of forces: fear and aggression tempered by love and generosity. Reassuringly perhaps, both have seemed equally prominent across the globe over the last few months.

Of course, fear is normal and healthy in these challenging times – we're naturally built to fear when our lives and those of our loved ones are threatened. Fight or flight is a common reaction to danger. But our society's structures also use this to create unnecessary further fear and panic, it is stirred up by politicians and the media. The good news is like fear, love, hope and compassion are also naturally within us. We're hardwired for belonging in relationships to seek companionship – our lives depend on these factors too. What if we allowed ourselves to be guided more often by them than by fear and threat wouldn't things be great?

In practice, the focus here has to be on our day-to-day lives- and the

relationships we have with God, other people, with nature and the world. The “work or change” always starts with us as individuals, As well as a chance for a summer holiday or some kind of get away break this time of year could this also be a time for us to pause and reflect? A chance to ground ourselves in the presence of God and regain the light and hope he gives?

Could we also remember to treat ourselves with gentleness and compassion? Could we remember to do the same for each other and the natural world we’re part of? Could we commit to developing truth and understanding over division and conflict in our own lives?

When uncertainty and suffering triggers fear and anxiety like it has in recent months, we need an antidote – not as a distraction but we need to acknowledge the all too real fear and suffering around us but with a compassionate reaction. Where do we feel grounded and safe? What brings us joy and peace? Where is there beauty? Because these are all present in every moment as well, if we’re open to receiving them. It is through healing ourselves by

drawing closer to Jesus that we will start to bring forth a happier, more peaceful world. Indeed, it’s unlikely that we’ll find creative ways forward fuelled solely by animosity, panic, and fear of change. In the bible there are so many references telling us - do not worry and do not be afraid God is in charge.

Matthew 6:25-34 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Psalms 23:3 "He refreshes my soul, He guides me along the right paths for his names' sake."

These verses and many others give us confidence that God sees our problems, he is planning to deliver us, and that He has our best interests at heart. He shows up when we mess up.

Christians can trust and rely on Him to supply a rescue as He did by the sacrifice of His Son for our salvation. This was a turning point in human history.

The world was in a terrible state then, but God surprised everyone by demonstrating that He has control over sin and death, raising His Son from the grave. Life itself falls under the command of He who gives life in the first place. Let go of all that holds you back all you think you can control and let God.

Words from a reassuring song:-

He has never let you down
Why start to worry now?
He is still the Lord of all we see
And He is still the loving Father
Watching over you and me.

*Songwriter: Twila Paris © Capitol CMG Publishing,
Universal Music Publishing Group.*

Andrew Sellwood

Worthing Aid for Ukraine

Goring URC was amazing in its support and generosity for our appeal for items for Ukraine, but how did it all come about?

I was asked by a Christian friend of mine who lives in Poland if it was possible to ask as many people as I could for items that could be sent to Ukraine. She had been at Warsaw train station when the thousands of people were arriving and heard first hand of the atrocities and the dire conditions for those left behind. How could I refuse?

I contacted as many schools and organisations as I could, where I had some sort of connection and more importantly, churches including GURC of course, where I had been involved since my earliest days. The response from everyone was totally overwhelming in terms of people's generosity and kindness.

The appeal was for long-life food, baby, sanitary and medical products and if at all possible, a generator, which I thought would be an impossible ask.

Every day, items were being left either in church porches, schools and even my own doorstep and in just two weeks we had collected and packed up 224 boxes of goods, when I was optimistically hoping for about 100. Not only that



but we had been given money for not one, but two generators, both of which, you will be very interested to hear, came from GURC.

I even had a lady from New York contact me, as she had heard about the appeal from her sister who lived locally, who ordered multiple boxes of nappies from Amazon UK which also landed on my doorstep.



... a lot of my neighbours came out to help load up and formed a chain ...

I went from worrying that I wouldn't have enough items to fill the van, to worrying that the van wouldn't be big enough, but God knew what he is doing and the van was exactly the right size to fit everything in comfortably. On the day of the departure, a lot of my neighbours came out to help load up and formed a chain from my garage to the van which made it a very swift and efficient operation.

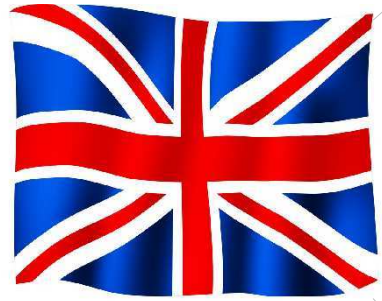
I was sent pictures when our van arrived in Warsaw and have also seen pictures of our boxes being unloaded in Ukraine, so I can assure you that everything has arrived safely and is being distributed to the people who need it the most.

With very grateful thanks indeed for caring and for your practical love in action. Amanda Cherry



The helpful neighbours

We wish
Her Majesty
Many Congratulations



70

Years of Glorious Reign

Church Website

Did You Know

1. From the front page of our website you can reach the current Sunday Service, Welcome, Members'Area, and Diary of Events, as well as our new Safeguarding pages.
2. You can search for past week's services from the top menu bar under 'Worship'

Yucatan Peninsula Mexico



Exploring the Yucatan

In the Spring Chronicle we explained how our son, Neil, daughter-in-law Gaby and grandson Liam had relocated from Mexico City to the smaller city of Merida on the Yucatan peninsula and settled in very happily. We were finally able to visit in November 2021, after the lifting of some travel regulations. We have just returned from a second visit in April 2022 and all agree this is a really glorious and interesting area to live in/visit. We had always enjoyed exploring Mexico City on our stays there, and now the Yucatan is exciting with such a variety of things to do and see. During our two visits Neil, Gaby and Liam have taken us to so many places but we have only just begun to experience it, they tell us!

From Merida you travel north to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, visiting Progreso, the Yucatan's main port. Its pier, extending several kilometres into the Gulf as the water is so shallow, is considered to be the longest in the world, handling multiple cargo vessel operations and cruise ships. Progreso is also a beach resort which is crowded during the months of July and August and on weekends.

We read that hundreds of holidaymakers invade the beaches and the ocean promenade with its bars and seafood restaurants, but when we were there on a fabulously sunny and hot (30C) Friday in November, we were almost the only ones strolling along. We asked Neil and Gaby where everyone was and they replied that people do not visit the beach areas in winter, it was thought to be too cold!! We also found this when we enjoyed two Sundays at a beach club along this coastline and further down at Sisal. Each were virtually deserted and we swam in the waves with Liam and the family, or strolled along the sand, viewing beach houses, from small 'shacks' to the ultra-modern huge ones. Return visits in April with temperatures of 35C did see more families on the beaches, but still not as packed as you might picture UK resorts in similar hot weather!

There are many inlets, estuaries, points, lagoons, islands and keys of great beauty and possessing a variety of mangroves, vegetation and wildlife.

Much of the Yucatan coast has been declared a national park to protect habitats and conserve the rich variety of plant and animal species that live there.

We drove to Rio Lagartos Biosphere Reserve, many miles to the north-east, where we stayed for a few days in the tiny port village of Las Coloradas to explore and to view the large numbers of cormorants, herons, pelicans and vultures etc. Also here are numerous large flocks of flamingoes which gather to feed on the micro-organisms and algae that are found in the lagoons of this port. At certain times and in certain conditions, the water of these lagoons has a definite pink hue. The extremely high concentration of salt occasions many salt pans, with high salt 'mountains', gleaming pure white in the bright sunshine, which await packing and transportation. What a sight beside the pinkness!

We wrote previously of the miles and miles of jungle greenery you drive past when travelling around the Yucatan, and the quiet 'motorways' you use to get about.

We were often to be found driving along these excellent roads for an outing, for instance to venture south-west for a long weekend in the city of Campeche, where we walked on the top of its old walls whilst looking down onto everyday life in courtyards and gardens, explored an old fort and strolled the long promenade, enjoyed

delicious fresh fish lunches whilst sitting in a small round 'dining room' on stilts over the waves, and later stopped in the small village of Becal to visit a family cave where generations have made 'Panama' hats from the jipijapa palms. The fibres need to be kept moist to be able to shape them, hence using the damp conditions of the cave.

Other times we left the motorway and drove further into the woodlands to visit spectacular Maya sites which suddenly just appeared, rising up out of the jungle of trees and greenery. Magnificent Mayapan, regarded as the last great Maya capital, covered an area of one and a half square miles with about 4000 structures and up to 12,000 inhabitants in AD 1250-1450. We were totally on our own here to wander around the ruins and were able to climb the tall pyramid for 360 degree views over the treetops.



It was with a great sense of achievement (and relief) that we all successfully made it back down! The atmosphere of the site was so peaceful, being miles and miles away from anything else. We were all in awe of its people who had planned this city and then executed the design, all the decorative elements, etc.

The same was felt at the stunning site of Uxmal, more than 4 square miles and housing 20,000 at its peak AD 600-800, where there were other visitors that day but not crowds, so again we were able to contemplate it all in peace and quiet. The Great Pyramid here is huge and we would not have wanted to attempt a climb, even if it had been allowed! Once again we thought of the enormous amount of labour involved in its construction.

As well as these and many other ruined sites we have yet to explore, the Maya

have left other truly wonderful memories – cenotes.

These are natural sinkholes filled with freshwater and formed when the limestone bedrock collapsed.



Mayans believed that cenotes were openings to the underworld, and with religious connections. The word has Mayan origins meaning 'well' and they played a crucial role in the development of Mayan civilization. The peninsula has very few rivers and lakes, so the cenotes represented the main source of water and many Mayan settlements were built next to a cenote.

There are over 3000 registered cenotes, mostly in the area covered by the Chicxulub crater which was formed after the meteorite impact that is said to have extinguished the dinosaurs. Over 1000 are open to the public to explore and swim, and we were so fortunate to visit two in April. Cenotes can be open, partially covered, or completely roofed as in a cave, and often with lush green plants or trees around the circular opening.





Those with rocky roofs have stalactites and the one we swam in that was totally enclosed also had stalagmites, thousands of years old. Our guide told us that it takes 100 years to grow 1 centimetre of these natural wonders and some had joined to form a continuous column.

The cenotes we explored required you to wear life-vests which were of great assistance, as it meant you were able to float around and take in the atmosphere without worrying about getting exhausted swimming or treading water. As the depth of one was about 180feet and the other 120feet, there was no chance of standing! The water was so clear and soft-feeling, with dragonflies flitting around and also beautiful blue birds with long tails, called 'toh'. In one we were the only ones swimming, so it was calm and peaceful and relaxing. The other totally-enclosed one was really two linked by an interconnected 'canal' and here we were in a group with a guide.



It was still peaceful and quiet though, as he had asked us to respect the Maya people and not to be noisy or splash around. As we went deeper into the cave system and the stalactites and stalagmites increased in number, we felt we were entering into a cathedral, with the cave soaring high about us and where there was a small natural opening in the roof, the sunlight poured through in a shaft of brilliant light – awesome and magnificent, and we felt it was such a privilege to be able to experience this wonderful place, as the Maya did indeed view this cenote as a religious place. We look forward to swimming in more cenotes on future visits – Neil, Gaby and Liam have found several more to show us and say each one is a different feeling, according to its situation, the size and condition. All spectacular though.



We are so fortunate to have our own 'local guides' living there and know we would not experience as much if we were holidaying there 'under our own steam'. We have walked around 'magic towns', such as Izamal (all painted in yellow since colonial times), so-called as they are kept as they were, without any new buildings or the usual commercial signage, or 'improvements'. We've stopped in Tizimin, home to the state's cattle ranchers as the fertile soil supports pasture and grain for the animals. We've visited a ruined hacienda to learn about the growing of henequen and the sisal rope production during the 19th century, and how the vast estate was the economic, religious and social life of the local community. Many haciendas have now been restored and become first-class hotels, museums or private homes.

One morning, Neil drove us around some of the local villages further away from Merida and what a different experience that was. What we might think were dilapidated, derelict small shacks hardly standing up beside the road, upon glancing through the open doorway, you would see a table and chair and a hammock strung from one wall to another and we realised this was a villager's home.

Others had stalls outside selling home-grown produce and we would stop to buy the most delicious fruit, huge pineapples for £1.50 and watermelons at 35 pence – breakfast was sorted!

This journey in particular showed the great divide that is being created more and more in the area. Building is everywhere, with much new housing and all its attendant necessities.

We read that Merida is one of the fastest-growing cities in Mexico, as since the pandemic people are leaving Mexico City for more rural areas, and also many Canadians 'winter' in the area and then stay as they love it so much. Beautiful homes (a fraction of the price they would be in the UK) are affordable to those who've sold a property in Mexico City or to overseas residents and are soon sold.

Another aspect to this building boom that distresses and worries Maya people is that acres of the natural woodlands are being destroyed and thus the habitats of animals and birds. We who live in the areas of Goring and Ferring etc can certainly empathise with the Maya as we come under threat of losing our open spaces.

Alan and Alison Westcott.



Goring United Reformed Church

A joint Pastorate with Sompting United Reformed Church



Minister: Rev Andrew Sellwood 01903 248259

Church Secretary: Mrs Val Gill 01903 531069

Pastoral Secretary: Mrs Hilary Redman 01903 260568

Welcome Editors

Would you like to join our team of Welcome editors?

All you need is a computer, email address
and a bit of time now and again.

It can be very exciting and a very worthwhile job to do.

People look forward to getting their copy of Welcome in
church every Sunday; also on line as many will know.

You will need to -

1. Assemble the notices given to you, usually by email,
2. Write some prayers for the week, or get somebody else
you know, to write them for you.
3. Keep an eye on the church diary and insert events into
Welcome for the coming week.

Possibly interested, or want to know more? Then speak to one
of the team or get in touch with Wilfred Rhodes





Your turn will come around approximately every 4 months.
Currently people on the rota do a 3 week run, but if you
cannot manage that, then the rota may be able to be adjusted
to suit your needs. Please ask.

Church Cleaning Day

The day started sunny and bright. Preparation for church cleaning day started with a long "To Do List".

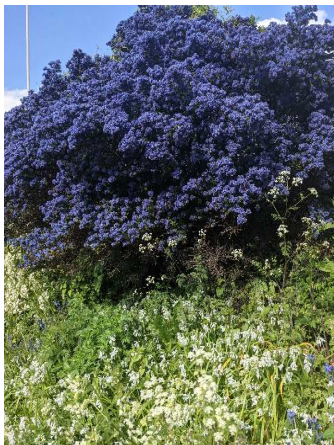
Were we being too ambitious in the time we had, would many people turn up? I heard the sound of a lawn mower, then realised some-one had started to mow the church grass! and it was not on the "To Do List" , and so it started, people turned up looked at the list and just got on with the jobs in hand.

Cleaning teams were formed, the work continued throughout the morning (we did have a quick coffee break) and the " The To Do List" was ticked off -

- Sanctuary 
- Cornwall Room 
- Main Hall 
- Gardening 

What great team work and so much achieved in a short space of time well done and thank you to all who came and made it possible.

Val Gill ... and thank you from the Property Group



The Chronicle: Autumn 2022

The closing date for the Autumn magazine articles is 1 August.

Please submit articles in either of the following ways :-

The Form on our Website

E-mail to chronicle@gurc.org.uk

Post to Graham Redman at 5 Salvington Hill, BN13 3AT

New Here?

If you are new to Goring United Reformed Church and would like to know a bit more about us, then you can very easily do so by either -

1. Picking up a Leaflet "New Here ?"
ask a 'Welcomer' at the door, or -
2. From our website <https://gurc.net>,
just click or tap on the [New Here?](#) button.

Weekday Activities

Please refer to our website for up to date information
<https://www.gurc.net/diary>

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Please send any contributions towards the Chronicle and mailing cost to her at -

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The Chronicle costs approximately £1.50 each to produce. Whilst no charge is made for the magazine, the Church would be very grateful for any donations given to help towards its cost of production.

There is a box provided for such purpose at the back of the church, or contributions may be made by post to Mrs Susie Thomas (address above).

Thank you.

The

CHRONICLE

<https://gurc.net/chronicle>

chronicle@gurc.org.uk



Goring United Reformed Church

Goring United Reformed Church is part of the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom. At the beginning of 2018, a Joint Pastorate was formed with Sompting United Reformed Church with whom we share Ministry.

The United Reformed Church has over 1600 churches in England, Scotland and Wales with a total membership of about 46500.

It has over 1300 congregations, and 608 active ministers. It was formed in 1972 when the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church of England and Wales united, and it was joined by the Reformed Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland in 1981 and the Congregational Union of Scotland in 2000.

The churches of Emmanuel in Worthing, Sompting, Goring and Littlehampton are part of the 'Worthing Cluster' and United Reformed Church Southern Synod, whose affairs are governed by General Assembly.

It was early in the 1930s that Worthing Congregational Church in Shelley Road began planning to build a new church in the rapidly growing area to the west of Worthing. The present building was opened in September 1961 when the congregation became too large to be accommodated in the church building that is now the hall. This first building was opened in 1948.

Other churches in Goring with whom we share the Christian faith are English Martyrs Roman Catholic Church, St Mary, St Laurence & St Richard Churches of England, New Life Baptist Church and Bury Drive Methodist Church.

We are here to worship God and proclaim the love of Jesus Christ to all



Goring United Reformed Church, Worthing, West Sussex

<https://gurc.net> and on facebook

