

# Bucharest to Budapest Pilgrimage To Transylvania & Hungary

Sample Itinerary  
(rev. 02/18/2008)

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During the spring of 2008 we are planning to organize a group pilgrimage to Eastern Europe to experience the historic roots of Unitarianism. We will share in the lives of our co-religionists in Eastern Europe, discuss the origins of our denomination with Unitarian ministers, and visit a number of significant historical Unitarian sites, including:

- Torda - where the first act of religious tolerance was signed in 1568
- The rock in Kolozsvár that Francis David spoke from when he "converted the whole town's population to Unitarianism."
- The beautiful Homorod Valley which is home to 17 Unitarian congregations & a number of significant partner church initiatives.
- Gyulafehérvár – where a 1000 year-old church houses the tomb of John Sigismund, the only Unitarian King in history.
- Deva – the hilltop ruins of the prison where Francis David was martyred.

Beginning in the lovely Hungarian capital city of Budapest and ending in Bucharest, the trip will also include a stay with our partner church in Kezdivasarhely, a tour of the Harvest Hope dairy farm, and visits to numerous historic village & town churches – including the villages in the pastoral Homorod Valley. Travelers will discover the warmth and loving hospitality of Transylvanian Unitarian families during home stays - attending church and experiencing rural village life

The trip is open to all, young and not so young. Through this trip we hope to foster new understanding of our historical roots and build deeper relationships with our co-religionists. The tour logistics will be coordinated by the UU Partner Church Council Pilgrimage Service which has more than a decade of experience facilitating the visits of North American UUs to Eastern & Central Europe. Should you wish to extend your stay and arrive early in Budapest the UUPCC Pilgrimage Service will be happy to assist you with your hotel reservations, guides, and suggested itineraries.

## *Tentative Itinerary:*

1. May 10, Saturday. (To arrive in time, you will need to leave the US no later than Friday, May 9). We will gather in the lobby of our Budapest hotel; first stop is the Bela Bartok Unitarian Church of Budapest for a brief centering ritual. Then on to Castle Hill to watch the sunset and the lights of the city reflected in the Danube, followed by group dinner. Overnight Budapest – Fabius Hotel\*\*\* (D)
2. May 11, Sunday. Morning services at 1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian Church followed by a reception with the minister and members of the congregation. Afterwards we take a guided bus tour of some of the sights of Budapest such as the Parliament Building, the Dohany Synagogue, and Hero's Square. Early group dinner followed by a free evening to relax or take in a cruise on the Danube. Overnight Budapest – Fabius Hotel\*\*\*(BLD)
3. May 12, Monday. We head southeast from Budapest to visit the National Memorial Historical Park at Opusztaszer which provides an exceptional introduction to Hungarian history. The park is a kind of Hungarian Williamsburg offering a wide variety of historical and cultural attractions

including a diorama, equestrian shows, a yurt village, and several museums. You will have free time to visit the attraction(s) of your choice. Afterwards we will have lunch nearby and then travel on to nearby Szeged, a beautiful river city near the Romanian & Serbian border. Overnight Szeged - Novotel Hotel\*\*\*\*. (BLD)

4. May 13, Tuesday. We take a walking and bus tour of Szeged before departing for Romania. We cross the border (lunch en route) and arrive in Deva for a worship service which we construct and lead outside the mountaintop citadel's prison cell where Francis David was martyred. Overnight Deva – Hotel Sarmis\*\*\*. (BLD)
5. May 14, Wednesday. We depart for Kolozsvar after breakfast. En route we tour the fairy-tale 13<sup>th</sup> century Hunyadi Castle, and stop in Gyulafehervar (Alba Iulia) to lay wreaths on the tombs of Unitarian King John Sigismund and his proto-Unitarian mother, Queen Isabella, and to visit their palace. By late afternoon, we arrive in Kolozsvar (Cluj) capital city of Transylvania, where we'll stay at the Hotel Victoria, previously reserved for communist party officials. A visit to the Unitarian headquarters and to the church of Francis David, home to the world's oldest Unitarian congregation. You will have an opportunity to speak with Unitarian ministers, and to visit the archives to view historical documents – including some hand-written by Francis David. Overnight Kolozsvar – Hotel Victoria\*\*\*. (BLD)
6. May 15, Thursday. Depart Kolozsvar after breakfast. Near Kolozsvar is Torda (Turda), where we will stop for a brief ritual in the church where the Diet of Torda and King John in 1568 issued a landmark declaration of religious tolerance, considered the founding act of Unitarianism. Afterward we will continue our tour with stops in the Alabaster Village of Meszko and Segesvar (Sighisoara) (a UNESCO World Heritage site) where you will have free time to explore this medieval walled city – purported birthplace of Vlad Tepes – aka Dracula. Lunch on your own. Later this evening we'll arrive in the Unitarian village of Szekelyderzs where we will tour the frescoed Unitarian church (one of only two Unitarian UNESCO World Heritage sites) and partake of a traditional peasant dinner in one of the bastions. Overnight Szekelyderzs – Village panzio & home stays. (BD)
7. May 16, Friday. Village day. Experience rural village life as we explore the Homorod Valley. We plan to visit to the Harvest Hope Dairy Farm and the frescoed Unitarian church in Homorodkaracsonfalva, and meet with the pilgrims from Unity Church in their partner village of Homorodszentpaul. Evening arrival in our partner town of Kezdivasarhely in time for a welcome reception and dinner with Rev. Maria Pap and members of the congregation. Overnight Kezdivasarhely – home stays (BLD)
8. May 17, Saturday. With Rev. Pap as our guide we will tour our partner town and visit local attractions including the fortress church at Gelence (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Evening program TBD. Overnight Kezdivasarhely – home stays. (BLD)
9. May 18, Sunday. 11am services with partner congregation followed by a group lunch with members of the congregation. Afternoon “American service” followed by a reception at the Unitarian center. Dinner with host families. Overnight – Kezdivasarhely – home stays. (BLD)
10. May 19, Monday. We wave goodbye to our new friends and depart Kezdi for the delightful mountain town of Sinaia. En route we stop in Sepsiszentgyorgy to visit the impressive new A-frame Unitarian church and shop at the women's craft cooperative. We continue on to the picturesque and historic Brasov (Brasso) city center where we will tour the massive Black

Church and then have free time to stroll the pedestrian heart of the city. Lunch on your own. Evening arrival in Sinaia. Dinner & overnight – Hotel Alpin Cota 1400\*\*\*\* (BD)

11. May 20, Tuesday. This morning we tour Peles Castle, a perfect Bavarian-style storybook castle that was home to a Romanian king and infamous dictator Nicolae Ceausescu summer palace of the former Romania royal family, in the Coming down out of the Transylvanian Alps by early afternoon, we cross the plains of old Romania and arrive in Bucharest, perhaps in time to visit the Peasant Museum and/or take in an evening musical performance. Farewell group dinner with UUPCC staff. Overnight Bucharest – Hotel Traian\*\*\*. (BLD)
12. May 21, Wednesday. Transfer to airport for your flight home. If you would like to extend your stay in Bucharest the UUPCC Pilgrimage Service can assist you with your hotel reservations and suggestions for guides and attractions.(B)

Land package includes transportation, accommodations, meals (as indicated above), guide(s), interpreter(s), and entrance fees to programmed tourist sites. The package does NOT include airfare or other transportation to/from Budapest, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, personal expenses incurred during free programs, and airport transfers before/after specified trip dates or different from main party. \*UUPCC registration fee pays for your membership in the UUPCC, the cost of processing your application & mailing your travel packet, and an impact fee paid to the Transylvanian Unitarian Church.