

Transylvanian Thanksgiving Pilgrimage

September 25 – October 4, 2012

Ten days, \$1,150 per person, double occupancy + \$150 registration fee. (Add \$225 single supplement). Includes ground transportation, meals, lodging guides, interpreters, and entry fees. Cost does not include airfare to/from Bucharest, Romania, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, departure airport transfer, or expenses incurred during free periods.

Ten days of spectacular scenery, loving hospitality, and unique architecture in Southeastern Transylvania. Discover the singular beauty of the Carpathian Alps and the fascinating history of the walled churches of the region. Beginning and ending in Bucharest, Romania this tour will visit the walled Unitarian churches of Szekelyderz (a UNESCO World Heritage site) and Arkos. You will spend a long weekend with your partner congregation and worship on this special *Őszi hálaadás* Sunday - the traditional Transylvanian Unitarian Thanksgiving. The tour also includes a night at a mountain resort high in the Carpathians, architecture as varied as Peles Castle (home of the former King of Romania), the sprawling Black Church in Brasov, and the Saxon fortress church at Biertan (a UNESCO World Heritage site). You will also participate in discussions about life under Communism & with local experts about the Transylvanian Unitarian Church today and the future of the Unitarian villages.

Revised Itinerary (10/23):

- Sept 25 (Tues) Arrive Bucharest Otopeni airport. Transfer to motor coach for 2 hr drive to resort town in the Southern Carpathians. Group dinner and orientation. Overnight Sinaia – Hotel Cota 1400***. (D)
- Sept 26 (Wed) AM tour of Peles Castle, former summer residence of the Romanian royal family before departing for Brasov/Brasso. Tour of the historic Black Church, the largest gothic church between Vienna and Istanbul, and site where the reformation began in Transylvania. Free time to explore picturesque Brasov city center. Lunch on your own. Early evening drive across rural Transylvania to medieval walled-city of Sighisoara/Segesvar, purported birthplace of Vlad Tepes – aka Dracula. Dinner & overnight Segesvar – Hotel Claudiu ***. (BD)
- Sept 27 (Thurs) Morning tour of Saxon fortress church at Biertan (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Lunch in restored village square before returning to Segesvar. Free time to stroll in the city, shop, climb the clock tower, and/or visit the museum of your choice. Dinner on your own. Overnight Segesvar - Hotel Claudiu ***. (BL)
- Sept 28 (Fri.) Morning tour of the Orban Balazs Unitarian High School in Szekelykeresztur followed by guided tour of frescoed Unitarian church at Szekelyderz (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Luncheon discussion with the Unitarian minister about life under communism and the significance of Oszi Halaadas in the Transylvanian Unitarian tradition. Early evening departure for partner villages. Dinner and overnight with partner congregation. (BLD)
- Sept 29 (Sat) Village day. Relax and explore your partner village as an “honored guest”. Program details TBD by minister & pilgrims. Overnight in partner village. (BLD)
- Sept 30 (Sun) Thanksgiving Services with your partner congregation. Oszi Halaadas celebrates the end of the harvest season and is one of the four Transylvanian Unitarian communion Sundays. Overnight in partner village. (BLD)
- Oct 1 (Mon) Depart villages after breakfast and gather again in Szekelyudvarhely, the heart of the Harghita County. Group lunch & discussion with UUPCC staff about village experience. Optional PM shopping excursion to pottery village of Korond & visit to

Szelykefurdo site of the annual Unitarian “Gathering”. Free evening to rest & relax. Dinner on your own. Overnight Szekelyudvarhely – Hotel Kukullo***. (BL)

- Oct 2 (Tues) Scenic drive across Harghita Mountains. Lunch en route. PM tour of the Unitarian fortress church & village museum in Arkos. Shopping stop at women’s craft cooperative, and a visit to the Unitarian Church of Sepsiszentgyorgy, home to the world’s largest Unitarian congregation. Discussion with local minister(s) about village economic development. Dinner & overnight Sepsiszentgyorgy – Hotel Sugas***. (BLD)
- Oct 3 (Wed) Morning departure for Bucharest. Lunch en route. PM visit to the Peasant Museum and/or the Village. Museum. Farewell dinner with folklore show. Overnight Bucharest – Hotel Herestrau***. (BLD)
- Oct 4 (Thurs) Depart Bucharest for US. (If you would like to extend your stay and tour Bucharest we will assist you with the arrangements for guides, lodging, etc. (B)