

Greater Washington Area UU Pilgrimage Transylvania & Budapest

During July of 2009 the Greater Washington Area UU Council is organizing a pilgrimage to Transylvania and Budapest to explore and experience the historic roots of Unitarianism. We will discuss the origin of our faith with Unitarian ministers; visit Unitarian schools & churches and other 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."
- Szekelyderzs – the frescoed church which is the only Unitarian UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Gyulaferhervar – where a 1000 year-old church shelters the remains of the Unitarian King – John Sigismund and his mother Isabella.
- Meszko - the “Alabaster Village” made famous by the book of the same name.
- Deva – the ruins of the prison where Francis David died

Beginning and ending in the lovely Hungarian capital city of Budapest, the trip will include three days & nights in your congregation's partner village (if your church does not have a partner in Transylvania we will arrange for you to stay in a Unitarian village with others from the group). GWA pilgrims will discover the warmth and loving hospitality of Transylvanian Unitarian families during a home stay - attending church, sharing a relaxed picnic and experiencing rural village life

The trip is open to all, young and not so young. Through this trip we hope to foster a new understanding of our historical roots and build deeper relationships with each other and our co-religionists overseas. 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.

Tentative Itinerary: (B/L/D – Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner included in trip fee): hotels subject to change due to availability at time of booking.

- Thursday, July 9. Suggest departure for Budapest (there will be an air travel option although everyone is free to make their own plans to arrive in Budapest by Friday).
- Friday, July 10. Afternoon arrival at Ferihegy Airport, Budapest. Transfer to hotel included for those arriving as a group. Welcome reception with UUPCC staff. Free evening to rest, relax or explore Budapest. Overnight Budapest – Fabius Hotel***. (D)
- Saturday, July 11. Morning bus tour of Budapest highlights (Hero's Square, Castle Hill, Jewish Quarter and a stop at 2nd Unitarian Church) followed by free afternoon/evening to visit your favorite museum, stroll the city and take in a night cruise on the Danube. Lunch & dinner on your own. Overnight Budapest – Fabius Hotel***. (B)
- Sunday, July 12. Morning services at 1st Unitarian Church followed by a reception with the minister and members of the congregation. Free afternoon & evening to continue your exploration of the city. Dinner on your own. Overnight Budapest – Fabius Hotel***. (BL)
- Monday, July 13. Travel Day. Departure after breakfast for Romania. Orientation en route about village life in Transylvania, the current structure, beliefs and challenges of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church. We will have a traditional gulas lunch at a Hungarian csarda (roadhouse) and dinner at a Unitarian-owned village B&B in time to watch “the cows come home”. Evening arrival in Kolozsvar/Cluj, the Unitarian “Rome”. Overnight Kolozsvar – Unitarian Center for Students & Pilgrims (standard) or Hotel Victoria (upgrade). (BLD)
- Tuesday, July 14. Morning Unitarian tour of Kolozsvar including 1st Church (which houses the famous Francis David rock), the Unitarian HQ & High School, and St. Michael's Church

where Francis David once preached. Group lunch followed by an optional afternoon day trip to the nearby “Alabaster Village” of Mezszo and the scenic Torda Gorge. You may remain in Kolozsvár to explore on your own. Free evening to see a movie, take in a concert or catch up on your sleep. Dinner on your own. Overnight Kolozsvár – UCSP or Victoria Hotel***.(BL)

- Wednesday, July 15. Depart Kolozsvár after breakfast for Deva. En route we stop in Gyulafehérvár to visit the 1000 year-old church where the Unitarian King Sigismund and his mother, Isabella are entombed. Afternoon climb to the citadel at Deva where we visit the memorial which commemorates the site where Francis David, founder of the Unitarian Church, was imprisoned and died. Dinner & overnight Deva – Melite Guest House (standard) or Hotel Sarmis*** (upgrade). (BLD)
- Thursday, July 16. Depart Deva after breakfast for scenic ride across rural Transylvania En route we visit fairytale medieval castle at Vadjuhunyad and stop to view the environmental disaster that is Copsa Mica. Lunch & tour of the Saxon fortress church in Biertan (a UNESCO World Heritage site) Evening arrival just outside the medieval walled city of Segesvár/Sighisoara the purported birthplace of Vlad Tepes – aka “Dracula”. Free time to swim, do emails & relax. Overnight Feheregyhaza – Hotel Europa***. (BLD)
- Friday, July 17. Free morning/afternoon to explore Segesvár. Visit the museums of your choice, stroll the ancient cobblestone streets, and shop for tasteless Dracula souvenirs Lunch on your own before departing for villages. En route we tour the frescoed Unitarian church at Szekelyderzs (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Dinner & overnight with partners - home stay.
- Saturday, July 18. Village Day – program TBD by partner congregation. Village home stay.
- Sunday, July 19. Worship services with partner congregation. Reception afterward with members of congregation. Farewell dinner with host families and minister. Village home stay.
- Monday, July 20. Depart villages after breakfast and gather together again in Marosvásárhely/TG-Mures to share our experience from the weekend, and begin our journey home. Group lunch & pm walking tour of historic and picturesque Marosvásárhely city center including the Art Nouveau Cultural Palace & Mirror Hall. Overnight Marosvásárhely – hotel TBD. (BLD)
- Tuesday, July 21. Travel Day. Depart Marosvásárhely for Budapest. Shopping stop en route at embroidery village of Korosfo for incredible deals on handwork of all sorts. Evening arrival Budapest. Farewell group dinner. Overnight Budapest – Ibis Airport Hotel. (BLD)
- Wednesday, July 22. Transfer to airport for return flights to US. If you wish to extend your stay in Budapest or elsewhere in Europe (Vienna is just 3 hours away by train, Prague 7) the UUPCC Pilgrimage Service can assist you with your travel arrangements. (B)

14 days/12 nights Land package offered by UUPCC Pilgrimage Service \$1,475 standard or \$1,650 upgrade (see note 1 below) - double occupancy (add \$250 for single supplement – see note 2 below) + \$150/person non-refundable registration fee*. Children 12 and under sharing accommodations with 2 adults are ½ price and not subject to the registration fee. 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.

Note 1 - The upgrade option substitutes 3*** hotels for the 2 nights at the Unitarian Center and the 1 night at the Melite House. The Unitarian Center offers air-conditioned dormitory rooms with private baths, but requires a climb of 4 flights of stairs. The Melite House in Deva is a guest house run by the Reformed Church with dormitory style rooms and shared baths.

Note 2 – Single rooms cannot be guaranteed at either the Unitarian Center or the Melite House. If a single room is desired for these nights the upgrade AND single supplements should be selected.