

Spring/Pentecost Pilgrimage To Transylvania & Budapest

(June 3 - 13, 2011)

Proposed Itinerary

During the late spring of 2011 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 Unitarian sites as well as attractions of general interest 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."
- Meszko – the “Alabaster Village” served by Ferenc Balazs and made famous by the namesake book.
- 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.
- Peles Castle – summer palace of the Romanian royal family.
- Saxon fortress church at Biertan & the medieval walled city of Sighisoara/Segesvar, purported birthplace of Vlad Tepes – aka Dracula.
- Optional pre-trip extension with arrival in Bucharest.

Beginning in Kolozsvár (Cluj), Romania and ending in the lovely Hungarian capital city of Budapest, the trip will also include a stay in a Unitarian village, and visits to numerous historic village & town churches. Travelers will discover the warmth and loving hospitality of Transylvanian Unitarian families during a home stay in a Unitarian village and experience 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.

Pre-trip Extension – Bucharest arrival (if you wish to arrive earlier in Bucharest in order to tour the city itself the UUPCC can book your hotel and/or provide suggestion for tourist destinations & guides).

- June 1st – Wednesday PM – gather/arrive at Bucharest, OTP airport. Transfer to motor coach for 2 hour drive to Carpathian Mountain resort town of Sinaia. Group dinner & orientation with UUPCC staff. Dinner & overnight Sinaia, - Hotel Alpin Cota 1400***(D)
- June 2nd – Thursday. AM tour of Peles Castle, summer palace of the Romanian Royal family. Group lunch followed by PM walking tour of picturesque Brassó city center, including the Black Church which houses Europe's largest collection of oriental prayer rugs. Evening arrival in Kohalom/Rupea. Dinner & overnight Lilliana Pensuine***(BLD)
- June 3rd – Friday. Morning tour of Saxon fortress church at Vicri (a UNESCO World Heritage site) followed by a scenic drive across rural Transylvania. Lunch en route. Early evening arrival in Cluj/Kolozsvár. Join base itinerary.(L)

Base Trip Tentative Itinerary: (hotels & itinerary details subject to availability and conditions at time of booking):

- June 3rd – Friday. Arrival in Kolozsvár/Cluj Romania. UUPCC staff will meet you at CLJ airport or at the Kolozsvár/Cluj train station. Transfer to hotel. Free afternoon for early arrivals. Group dinner & orientation with UUPCC staff. Overnight Kolozsvár – Hotel Transylvania*** (D)

- June 4th - Saturday. Morning Unitarian tour of Kolozsvar including the Unitarian High School and 1st Church which houses “The Rock” upon which Francis David is said to have stood when he converted the city to Unitarianism, and St Michael’s church where he once occupied the pulpit. Group lunch. Afternoon trip to nearby Torda where we visit the Church of the Edict and the Alabaster Village of Meszko to hear the story of Ferenc Balazs and see the jewel box church he designed and painted himself before returning to Kolozsvar. Dinner on your own. Overnight – Hotel Transylvania***. (BL)
- June 5th – Sunday. Morning services at 1st Unitarian Church of Kolozsvar. Group lunch before departing for Deva. En route we stop in Gyulaferhervar to visit the 1000 year-old church where the Unitarian King Sigismund and his mother Isabella are entombed. Dinner & overnight Deva – Hotel Sarmis***(BLD)
- June 6th – Monday. Morning vespers at the citadel above Deva where Francis David was martyred in 1579. Afterwards we depart Deva for Sighisoara/Segesvar with stops at the fairy-tale 13th century castle at Vadjahunyad and the fortified Saxon church at Biertan (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Dinner & overnight – Sighisoara/Segesvar – Hotel Claudiu***(BLD)
- June 7th - Tuesday. Morning orientation session in the citadel of Segesvar (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Free time to shop, stroll, and visit the museum(s) of your choice. Lunch on your own. Afternoon departure for the Unitarian villages. Welcome reception/dinner with minister & host families. Overnight Unitarian village – home stays. (BD)
- June 8th – Wednesday. Village day. Tour of village with the parish minister as our guide. Visits with families and discussion of village life and rural economic development and the impact of Romania’s accession into the EU. Overnight Unitarian village - home stays (BLD)
- June 9th – Thursday. (BLD) Free morning with host families to pack and say goodbye. Later morning departure for TG-Mures/Marosvasarhely. Group luncheon. Walking tour of the city center including Art Nouveau Cultural Palace and the Teleki Library. Dinner at Hungarian csarda restaurant. Optional 7pm symphony concert. Overnight Marosvasarhely – Atlantic Hotel**** (BLD)
- June 10th – Friday. Travel day. Morning departure for Budapest. Shopping stop in the embroidery village of Korosfo for incredible deals on unique crafts and handwork. Group lunch en route. Evening arrival in Budapest. Dinner & overnight – Fabius Hotel***(BLD)
- June 11th – Saturday. Morning orientation session with UUPCC staff for assistance with Metro passes & suggestions of itineraries. Free day in Budapest to visit the museums and attractions of your choosing. Lunch and dinner on your own. Overnight Budapest – Hotel Fabius***(B)
- June 12th – Sunday. Morning services at 1st Unitarian Church of Budapest. This is Pentecost Sunday, one of the four communion Sundays in the Hungarian Unitarian tradition. Reception afterward with the minister and members of the congregation. Afternoon bus tour of Budapest highlights including Hero’s Square, Castle Hill, and the old Jewish Quarter, with a stop at the Bela Bartok Unitarian Church. Farewell dinner with UUPCC staff. Overnight Budapest - Hotel Fabius***(BLD)
- June 13th – Monday. Transfer to airport for return flights to UK. 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)

11 days/10 nights Base Itinerary– (Cluj/Kolozsvar arrival June 14) land package offered by UUPCC Pilgrimage Service \$1750 (double occupancy) + \$150/person non-refundable registration fee*. (add \$250 for single supplement) Children 12 and under sharing accommodations with 2 adults are ½ price and not subject to the registration fee.

2 day/2 night – Extended itinerary – (Bucharest arrival June 12) land package is an additional \$350 (double occupancy) or \$400 single.

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 & Cluj/Kolozsvar or Bucharest, 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.