

Eliot Unitarian Chapel Pilgrimage Transylvania – June/July 2012

Revised January 26, 2012

Explore and experience the historic roots of Unitarianism, and reconnect with our partner church. We will spend 5 days/nights in this pastoral village in central Transylvania, getting to know our partners better, visiting local sights and having fun. Along the way we will visit historic Unitarian sites and places of a more general interest, including:

- Torda - where the first act of religious tolerance in Europe was signed in 1568
- Kolozsvár – the city in central Romania where the Transylvanian Unitarian Church has its headquarters, high school and the church which houses the rock that Francis David spoke from when he "converted the whole town's population to Unitarianism."
- Gyulafehérvár where a 1000 year-old church houses the tomb of the Unitarian King Sigismund and his mother, Queen Isabella.
- Meszko - the "Alabaster Village" made famous by the book of the same name.
- Deva – participate in a vesper service in the citadel where Francis David was martyred.
- Sibiu – the German Saxon capital of Transylvania. Declared European city of culture for 2008. Home of many world-class museums..

The base trip will begin in the Transylvanian city of Cluj/Kolozsvár which houses the headquarters of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church, and then continue on to rural Transylvania where we will tour a number of Unitarian holy places and tourist sites before arriving in our partner village. St. Louis pilgrims will discover the warmth and loving hospitality of Transylvanian Unitarian families attending church, sharing meals, and experiencing rural village life. In addition to the base trip there is also on offer a 4 day/3 night optional pre-trip extension to Budapest.

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 Eva Kelemen who has more than a decade of experience facilitating the visits of North American UUs to Eastern & Central Europe through Project Harvest Hope Travel.

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

Pre-trip extension Budapest

- Friday, June 22. Arrive/gather in Budapest. Transfer to your hotel. Group dinner. Overnight Budapest – Fabius Hotel*** (standard) or Hotel Belvedere**** (upgrade). (BD)
- Saturday, June 23. Morning orientation followed by bus/walking tour of Budapest including Castle Hill, Hero's Square, the Jewish Quarter, and the Bela Bartok Unitarian Church. Free afternoon/evening to take in the museum of your choice and indulge yourself at one of the city's famous thermal spas. Lunch & dinner on your own. Overnight Budapest – Fabius Hotel*** or Hotel Belvedere****. (B)
- Sunday, June 24. Morning check-in with trip leaders for advice on attractions and logistics followed by optional 11am services at 1st Unitarian Church. Otherwise free day in Budapest to shop, stroll the city, and take in a night cruise on the Danube. Lunch & dinner on your own. Overnight Budapest – Fabius Hotel*** or Hotel Belvedere****. (B)
- Monday, June 25. Travel Day. Departure after breakfast for Romania by plane for a short hop to Transylvania. Mid-day arrival in Kolozsvár/Cluj, the Unitarian "Rome".

4 days/3 night standard land package \$495 (double occupancy). Add \$85 single supplement. Includes 3 night accommodation in 3*** hotel with breakfast, arrival dinner, English speaking tour director, half-day guided tour of Budapest highlights, transfers from airport, and airfare to Kolozsvár/Cluj.

You may upgrade your hotel to the 4**** Hotel Belvedere for \$50 double or \$90 single.

The Fabius Hotel www.hotelfabius.hu is a small family run hotel/panzio. The Hotel Belvedere www.belvederehotels.hu is a new 4**** hotel with roof top swimming pool. Both facilities are located on the Buda side of the river and face a large city park.

Base Itinerary Transylvania

- Monday, June 25. Gather mid-day in Cluj/Kolozsvar, Romania. 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. dinner & orientation. Overnight Kolozsvar - Unitarian Center for Students & Pilgrims (standard – see note 2) or Hotel Victoria*** (deluxe). (D)
- Tuesday, June 26 - Depart Kolozsvar after breakfast for Deva (3 ½ hours driving time). En route we stop at the “Church of the Edict” in Torda and again at the 1000 year old church in Gyulafehervar/Alba Iulia which houses the tombs of King Sigismund and his mother, Queen Isabella Group lunch before continuing on to the citadel at Deva for an evening vesper service outside the cell where Francis David, first Bishop of the Unitarian Church was martyred. Dinner & overnight Deva – Melite Guest House (standard – see note 3) or Hotel Sarmis*** (deluxe).(BLD)
- Wednesday, June 27. Depart Deva after breakfast for Sighisoara/Segesvar (3 hours driving time). Morning detour to visit the fairytale 13th century castle at Vadjahunyad. Sandwich lunch en route to the Saxon fortress church at Biertan (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Evening arrival in Sighisoara. Group dinner. Overnight Sighisoara – Unitarian Guest House (standard – see note 4) or Hotel Claudiu*** (deluxe)
- Thursday, June 28. Morning orientation in medieval citadel of Sighisoara (a UNESCO World Heritage site) followed by free time to stroll the picturesque town, shop, and take in some of the museums. Lunch on your own. PM departure for partner village. Evening arrival in Nyaradszentmarton. Welcome reception & dinner with minister & host families. Overnight – village home stays. (BD)
- Friday– Monday, June 29 – July 2. Village days making new friends & reconnecting with old. Program specifics TBD by organizers and hosting congregation. Optional afternoon/evening day trips to nearby sights. These may include the “flooded village” of Bozodujfalu, the Straw Museum in Korospatak, and the craft village of Korond along with picnics, horse cart rides & hiking in the hills. Overnights village home stays. (BLD)
- Tuesday, July 3. Depart Nyaradszentmarton after breakfast to begin our journey back to Kolozsvar/Cluj. Stop en route to visit the picturesque Marosvasarhely/TG-Mures city center for a tour of the Art Nouveau Cultural Palace and a group lunch. Afternoon arrival in Kolozsvar. Free time to relax. Group discussion about village experience. Farewell dinner. Overnight Kolozsvar/Cluj – UCSP (standard) or Hotel Victoria (deluxe)***
- Wednesday, July 4. Transfer to airport for return flights to Budapest, other European destinations, or the US.

10 days/9 nights base land package is estimated at \$1,375 double occupancy. There is also an accommodation upgrade option offered which substitutes 3**** hotels for the guest house and dormitory facilities. The cost of the accommodation upgrade is \$150 for double occupancy or \$250 for single travelers. Single accommodations cannot be guaranteed in guest houses and dormitories. Travelers who require single accommodations should select the accommodation upgrade. Children 12 and under sharing accommodations with 2 adults are ½ price. Land package includes ground transportation, accommodations, meals (as indicated above), tour director, guide(s), interpreter(s), and entrance fees to programmed tourist sites. The package does NOT include airfare, gratuities, personal expenses incurred during free programs, and airport transfers before/after specified trip dates or different from main party. RESERVE A SPACE TODAY with a \$350 registration fee, which is totally refundable up to April 10. Make check payable to Eliot Unitarian Chapel and send to Rev. Keyes, who will be the ‘spirit guide’ for this trip, as he has been for many others.