

NSUC'S PARTNER CHURCH CONNECTION

This information was updated on: March 8, 2007

Our Partner Church in Hungary

Since 1994, we have been partnered with Unitarius Egyházközség (Unitarian Church) in Hódmezovásárhely¹, Hungary. Its Minister, Rev. Mihály Kiss and his wife Tunde visited our church in July 1999. Since then members of our congregation have made three visits to Hungary, most recently in June 2005. The name "Hódmezovásárhely" roughly translates as "Beaver meadow marketplace." (How appropriate for a Canadian partnership!)

Our Partner Church connections mean a lot to our congregation. This is what some members say about partnership:



"I knew that our 2005 visit to our Unitarian partners in Hungary was at some level about seeing firsthand how they had used the money our congregation generously donated over the previous decade. While the amounts were modest, I discovered that our funds and our belief in our partners and their potential gave them the energy and courage to take on some daunting projects to restore their church property and slowly rebuild their congregation after communism."

Brian Welwood
Chair, Partner Church Committee

"Rev. Kiss and his wife Tunde were fabulous hosts – so gracious, warm and fun. It was wonderful to experience Hungarian food, drink, domestic life and culture in their home and town. We truly felt that we were valued friends. They enjoyed and appreciated our visit so much, and they continue to insist that we convince others to visit."

Kay Welwood
Member, Partner Church Committee



"Meeting Unitarians from Hungary, Romania, India and the Philippines has been among the most spiritually transformative experiences I have had."

Susan Maclaren
Past Networker for the UUPCC

What does "partnership" mean?

In answer, this is NSUC's Partner Church Committee's Mission Statement:

We give support, provide witness to alleviate oppression, and build relationships among pockets of Unitarian Universalists scattered around the world. Together, we are a Unitarian Universalist network of dignity, worth and hope in the world.

¹ Pronounced as: hôd`me`zövä'shärha

Our focus is the relationship between the people at Unitarius Egyházközség in Hódmezovásárhely, Hungary and we here at North Shore Unitarian Church in West Vancouver.

In practical terms, we:

- correspond (mostly by email) with Rev. Kiss and his wife
- exchange news about our churches
- periodically travel to visit them
- have a special weekend dedicated to our partners, usually in March – check the calendar
- send the collection from the partner church service to Unitarius Egyházközség to support the work and programs of their church.

Our goals over the next few years are to:

- bring some of their youth to Vancouver for a visit
- encourage more members of NSUC to travel and visit them
- have the two congregations work on a project together.

We support them by:

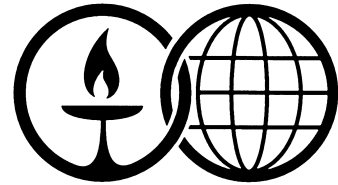
- being friends and witnesses so they never again have to face institutional discrimination and oppression, as they did for the last half of the twentieth century
- giving some financial support to their re-building efforts and programs.

They support us:

- by teaching us dedication, resilience, faith and generosity in the face of oppression
- as the living descendents of our spiritual foundation from 1568, where freedom of religion and of conscience was proclaimed at *The Diet of Torda*:

"Our Royal Majesty, as he had decided at the previous debates within his country about matters of religion, confirms as well at the present Diet that every orator shall preach the gospel by his own (personal) conception, at any place if that community is willing to accept him, or if it isn't, no one should force him just because their soul is not satisfied with him; but a community can keep such a preacher whose teachings are delightful. And no one, neither superintendents nor others, may hurt a preacher by this or by the previous constitutions; no one may be blamed because of their religion. No one is allowed to threaten others with prison or divest anyone of their office because of their profession: because faith is God's gift born from hearing and this hearing is conceived by the word of God."

The Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC) describes partnership in these ways:



The MISSION is that partnerships are:

- between North America and other countries
- sought and welcomed
- found in Romania (specifically Transylvania²), Hungary, and the Czech Republic
- found also in the Philippines, India, and Poland.

The VISION of partnerships is that they be:

- desired
- mutually beneficial
- responsibly sustained
- linked by joint and mutual covenant.

The BELIEFS about partnerships are that they are effective:

- because they are grassroots efforts
- for appreciating historical roots
- for appreciating liberal religion in all its facets
- for supporting social justice and international understanding
- for reinvigorating North American Unitarian Universalism.

The UU Partner Church Council SUPPORTS partnerships:

- by encouraging a wide range of models
- by being open to new models
- by emphasizing partnerships are based on relationships
- by developing effective leadership, stewardship, fellowship and logistics
- by providing outreach and information support
- by working co-operatively with international religious organizations
- by ensuring they provide mutually beneficial, worldwide impact.

For more:

- information
- to find out about trips or
- to donate resources (your time, goods or money)
- contact our committee: Chair, Brian Welwood at bwelwood@telus.net.

² Transylvania, now part of Romania, was originally part of Hungary until the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. The capital of Transylvania is Kolozsvár, where the Unitarian seminary and high school is located. The official language is Romanian, but Hungarian is spoken and its customs are prevalent. Transylvanian Unitarians are a minority (of about 55,000 people), within the Hungarian minority, within Transylvania (Romania) itself. Both minority groups were persecuted under Communist rule in Romania, and this prejudice still exists somewhat today in 2007.