

February 2019

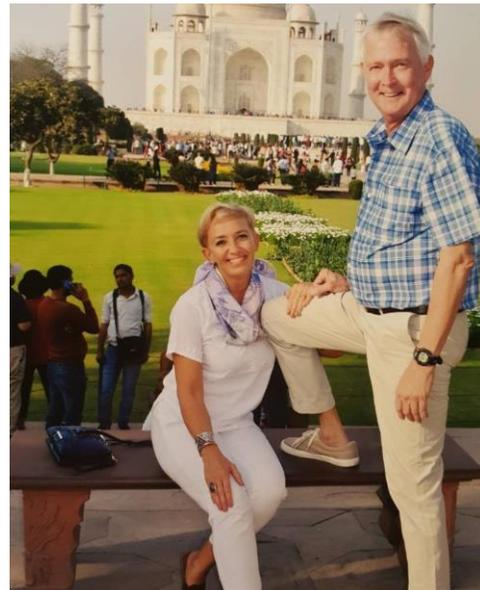
Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council



Dear UUPCC Members,

With tremendous gratitude for their service, I am sharing the news that John Dale and Csilla Kolcsar, our UUPCC's Travel Coordinators extraordinaire, have decided to retire at the end of the 2019 travel season.

The last Transylvania trip they will lead will be our Thanksgiving 2019 Pilgrimage. They will also lead the February 2020 India trip.



They have skillfully and lovingly led countless Unitarian Universalists on UUPCC pilgrimages. When many of us think of the UUPCC and partnerships, the first faces we see are Csilla and John. They have brought to their work enormous dedication, attention to the little details that make trips as comfortable as they can be, deep knowledge of and love for the Unitarian homeland in Transylvania, a wonderful ability to connect with all sorts of different kinds of travelers, sensitivity to the needs of North American travelers as well as their hosts, creativity, flexibility, and steadfast commitment to the mission of the UUPCC (to name just a few of their exemplary skills). And in recent years, they have led trips with equal passion and skill to the Khasi Hills. We have been so richly blessed to have them work for the UUPCC for the better part of two decades.

Like so many of you, I have my own Csilla and John story. I first went on a pilgrimage with them in 2008. My then seventeen-year-old daughter Hattie joined me on the trip. It was life-changing for her. She fell in love with international travel and Eastern Europe and later did study

abroad programs in Budapest and Lithuania. Csilla took Hattie under her wing on that trip and, as she has done with so many of us, transmitted her love for her homeland and our Unitarian faith. John as always made impeccable arrangements and seamlessly guided us when, as inevitably happens, unexpected and unavoidable twists and turns called for improvisation. I will be eternally grateful for their extraordinary gifts to Hattie, the congregation I served at the time, the UUPCC, and me.

With Csilla's and John's impending retirement, our Pilgrimage Committee and Board of Directors have already begun working with me to determine how we will proceed with our travel program. We hope to open the application process in mid-March and have a candidate(s) in place by the beginning of June. This will allow a short overlap of services to make sure there is good continuity in our program.

We will take these coming months to say thank you to John and Csilla and to hear from them, starting with their sharing some reflections about their upcoming retirement in the lead article of next week's newsletter. I hope that you will take the opportunity in your own way to individually say thank you as well. And for those of you who would like to travel with them one more time, please check out our Cross Cultural Pilgrimage in August, Thanksgiving Pilgrimage in September, and next February's India trip. It is also possible to add a few more congregational pilgrimages in 2019.

With deep gratitude for these two dedicated and wonderful people,

Rev. Roger Bertschausen
Executive Director

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