

## In the Interim

*Rev. Fred Muir, UUPCC Interim Executive Director*

If you've been connecting with your UU community via Zoom (or other platform), then you are probably anticipating the time we can all physically share space together again. Yet, when the UUA announced that the June 2021 General Assembly in Minneapolis would again be virtual, I started wondering how many changes we've experienced this year might become permanent or at least normalized in ways we could have never imagined — online doctor visits, classroom instruction, talk therapy, family gatherings, fewer shopping trips, and watching TV shows we thought we'd never like. These adaptations have become important in helping us to carry on until we get to the other side of the pandemic (take a listen to [“The Keep Going Song”](#)).



(*ˈɪn-tər-əm*: the time between two particular periods or events)

I've heard from many of you about your inventive and determined approaches to local and international partnership challenges during these times. While these may have brought unexpected frustrations and dead ends, there have also been joys, insights, and unanticipated breakthroughs. You have done your best to finish the year in an uplifting way that best serves the commitments you've made to each other and your partners. These gifts are really quite wonderful for you both!

The UUPCC staff and Board have also seen challenges and changes as we facilitate and sustain partnerships. Like you, we want to bring 2020 to a strong finish and, as we move into 2021, build a new organization to carry on the aspirations of the UUPCC. We cannot do this alone. We need your help!

**Last month you received information about our Annual Appeal. Without your financial commitment to the UUPCC, we won't finish the year as strong as we'd like; nor can we construct the sturdy bridge needed to carry us into our promising future. If you have already made your Annual Appeal donation, we thank you! If you are waiting or still considering, we look forward to hearing from you soon so that our planning and building may continue.**

The year 2020 was not like any of us anticipated, this is for sure! As we turn the page on the calendar, we hope that the new year will see us living into our UUPCC mission with deeper and broader opportunities. Thank you for everything you have brought to our shared journey.

**Take care, stay safe. and Happy New Year!**

[Donate here](#)

# ***Widening the Circle of Concern***

*By Rev. Eric Meter (Racine, WI), UUPCC Board Secretary*

In one of those moments that sticks with you, I took the IDI during a break at my first-ever UUPCC Annual Board in January 2016.

The IDI is shorthand for Intercultural Development Inventory, a tool used to assess intercultural competence. It is often used to assess our ability and challenges in reaching beyond the culture of our birth to more fully comprehend the experience of those realities and cultures quite different from our own. I was taking it in preparation to help lead a group in the congregation I then served as we prepared to work hand in hand with those from an inner-city neighborhood church. While I thought it might be interesting to take the assessment during a Partner Church Board meeting, I wasn't prepared for the degree of sparks of connection that came on for me.

Fast forward a bit. For several years now, your UUPCC Board has been devoting time at each of our monthly meetings as well as annual summits to share reflections on privilege and how we can support equity among the international partnerships we work so hard to promote. Since September, we've been using the *Widening the Circle: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change* to provide the framework for these discussions. Many of our congregations have study groups working on the ideas it presented.

These conversations have been rich and challenging, as you might imagine. And, like many such conversations, we're raising more questions than we are discovering answers or solutions. These questions include, "How do we replicate the good discussions that occurred in the Torda 450 celebrations, specifically those addressing how we might best share our distinct theologies in a nonjudgmental way?"

But that's the way of these things. Deep conversations, like any such relationship, are never really over. They simply keep evolving.

You can find the *Widening the Circle* report here at [UUA.org](http://UUA.org).

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## **Partnership Thrives!**

*Rev. Howard N. Dana, First Parish, Concord, MA*

First Parish and its partner congregation in Székelykeresztúr are holding quarterly Zoom meetings to check in and offer support. Meetings will continue through the Spring or as necessary. Partner minister Rev. Csaba Todor and congregants joined our [Sunday, September 27, 2020 service](#), which focused on Transylvanian Thanksgiving. We are exploring the possibility of doing something fun together, perhaps a variety show, a cooking exchange, or a virtual tour.

**Please send your stories and pictures and we'll feature them as part of our Partnership Thrives series**

Email to: [office@uupcc.org](mailto:office@uupcc.org)

# Celebrating the Centenary of our Church Partnership in the Time of Covid-19

*By Denton Crews, Chair, King's Chapel Partner Church Committee*

It was to be a grand occasion: the 100th anniversary of the partnership between First Unitarian Congregation of Kolozsvár (Cluj, Romania) and King's Chapel of Boston. In 2021, we would celebrate our roots in Transylvania, and in 2022 the celebration would continue in the United States. Our ministers and church committees began planning expectantly by video conference on Sunday afternoons in early 2020, the last one held on March 1, 2020. Two weeks later, COVID-19 changed everything.



**First Unitarian Congregation of Kolozsvár (Cluj, Romania) & King's Chapel of Boston**

Nearly a century ago, an historic partnership was created between the first Unitarian congregation in America and the first Unitarian congregation in Europe. In 1920, a service was conducted in King's Chapel for distressed Transylvanians, and Dr. Sydney Bruce Snow, Associate Minister, traveled to Transylvania with \$50,000 given by American Unitarians (\$1,238 from King's Chapel) in the wake of World War I. Dr. Harold E.B. Speight, the minister of King's Chapel, visited the Unitarian churches of Transylvania in the summer of 1922 as a member of a commission under the auspices of the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Europe. In response to the destruction and poverty observed by the commission, a number of "sister church" pairings were formed in the 1920's between Transylvanian and US churches. King's Chapel established a relationship with the church at Kolozsvár, contributing to it annually for five years. First Unitarian presented to King's Chapel an ancient and beautiful embroidered silk altar cloth, and Dr. Speight was given the title of Honorary Minister.

The partnership was robust in the early years but suffered the devastations of a world-wide depression, World War II, and the Communist occupation of Romania. Then, in 1978, Rev. Dr. Carl Scovel, minister of King's Chapel, visited Kolozsvár and planted the seeds of renewal. The sister church relationship revived and subsequently flowered with exchanges between the ministers, visits by lay delegations (including two Habitat builds in Transylvania), the formation of partner church committees, and a week-long visit by the minister of First Unitarian when he delivered a Minns Lecture in Boston. The bond survived and has been continuous ever since.

Today, nine months into the deadly pandemic of COVID-19, our churches are closed and services are remote. Nevertheless, we've stayed in touch via email, and on the first Sunday in

June 2020, we celebrated communion in the Transylvanian tradition and shared the service via YouTube with the congregation in Kolozsvár. In addition, our ministers, Rev. Joy Fallon and Rev. Norbert Rácz, have stayed in touch with each other; their conversations, however, are more about coping with coronavirus and less about celebrating the centennial. By telephone and text messages, they share experiences, relate the logistical demands of virtually sustaining their congregations, convey mutual support, and express condolences coupled with their confidence in the Christian ties that bind our congregations.



First Unitarian Congregation Rev. Norbert Rácz & King's Chapel Rev. Joy Fallon

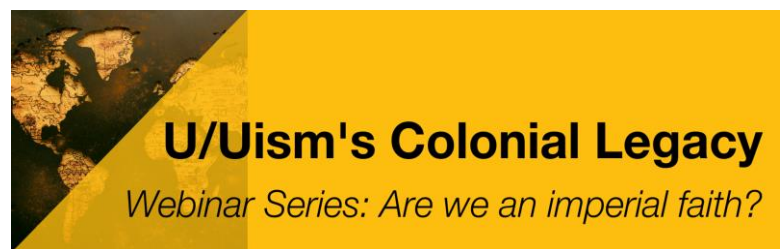
Surprisingly, even though we are less directly in touch as parishioners, it seems that our bond has deepened and we have become closer. After all, our unique historical ties remain historical, our beautiful buildings remain buildings, and our illustrious founders remain in the past, but the resilient people of our congregations are keeping the faith that inspires and sustains us. And when we meet again, whether via Zoom or in person, it will be a glad reprise of people in partnership on a journey. That will be a great time to celebrate!

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## U/Uism's Colonial Legacy Webinar Series

*From the UUA website*

During the Fall of 2020, the International Unitarian/Universalist Joint Working Group (Unitarian Universalist Association International Office, the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists, and the UU Partner Church Council) hosted a five-part webinar series that posed the question: Are we an imperial faith?



We invite you to listen to the recordings of all five sessions, which are now available on our website, along with the accompanying materials by following this link:

<https://www.uua.org/international/engagement/webinar>.



# Youth Pilgrimage Update

*Submitted by Rev. Andrew Weber, UUPCC Travel Coordinator*

## Greetings Youth Pilgrimage parents/guardians—

Our youth continue to meet virtually in preparation of traveling to Transylvania, and we want to share an update about what we have been doing.

We have let the youth know that travel to Transylvania in 2021 is still very much up in the air. With the ongoing global pandemic, there is a distinct possibility that we will again have to postpone our trip. Being both realistic and hopeful, we continue to meet for ongoing community building, education about Transylvania, and fun.

Earlier this month we gathered to check-in, give an update about travel, and "demystify" Transylvanian vampire lore. Over the next few months there are virtual gatherings to learn about the Hungarian language, watch a Hungarian movie, and do some Hungarian cooking! All the details were shared with the youth (if your youth[s] haven't received updates, please let us know).

As the year progresses, we will continue to keep you posted on any changes or updates about the pilgrimage. Also, we want to thank you for your continued support of the youth during these unique/strange/uncertain times. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to all of us.

- Ashley, Justin, and Andrew, Adult Leaders



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## River Road UU Congregation Celebrates 28<sup>th</sup> Annual PartnerFest

*By Joel Schrag, River Road UUC, UUPCC Board Member*

Undeterred by the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the River Road UU Congregation of Bethesda, Maryland, recently staged its 28th annual PartnerFest celebration. This event honors River Road's two partner congregations located in Fiafalva, Transylvania, and Mawblang, NE India. PartnerFest is a major fundraiser for River Road's Partner Church Committee, and it offers an ideal opportunity to share information with the broader congregation about these decades-long partnerships. In past years, the event has included both a festive meal, featuring either Hungarian or Indian cuisine, and a live music or dance performance.

While a meal was not feasible this year, the event featured two accomplished pianists (Shuai Wang and Clif Hardin) playing works by Handel, Chopin, Rossini, and others (in solo and duet) as well as video slide shows that brought River Road's partnerships to life. The whole program was broadcast from River Road's sanctuary on YouTube Live.



Left: Shuai Wang Center: Shue Wang and Clif Hardin duet Right: RRUC chancel

To experience this event yourself, navigate to this link <https://youtu.be/XTuwt47kAlg> to access a recording. Please note that video content begins after 14 minutes.

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## Update to “A New Vision”

*By Rev. Fred Muir, UUPCC Interim Director*

**In September’s “UUPCC News,” we provided a link to “A New Vision.”**  
( [https://uupcc.org/sites/default/files/a\\_new\\_vision\\_iuucg\\_report-proposal\\_2020.pdf](https://uupcc.org/sites/default/files/a_new_vision_iuucg_report-proposal_2020.pdf) )

This report is the first accounting of the work done by the International Collaboration Group (ICG) as we move toward the completion of the UUPCC’s and the ICUU’s decades of sustaining partnering opportunities and the creation of a new UU international organization that will deepen the work of international mutuality in meaningful ways for all UUs. Please look at the report in order to be informed about the vital steps we are taking toward our hopes and aspirations.

At every meeting we attend, new doors are opened and, as you might imagine, with every new opening there are opportunities and questions. The opportunities are many and exciting. Honestly, the challenge comes in narrowing the possibilities, at least at first, to clear and feasible directions. Many of the questions that we ask are some of the same ones we hear coming from you: What is to come of the core UUPCC commitments and programs, like creating, facilitating, and sustaining partnerships? We want to be transparent about this. As of now, we don’t have an answer to this important question or to others like it. As the ICG moves forward on this journey, we know just how hard it can be to stay focused on being intentionally

deliberate. We want to be careful to not get too far ahead of ourselves, which is to say—we are trying hard to create a strong foundation for what is yet to come. As this foundation is shaped and the new organization’s mission is written, there will be a direction set and many of our questions will be answered (or at least there will be heightened clarity). We will do our best to keep you up to date as we know more. In the meantime, we continue to want to hear from you and explore answers together. There will be more opportunities for sharing ideas in the coming months.

Be assured of this: The group that has been meeting every other week since February is committed to Unitarian/Universalism, dedicated to creating a path forward, and excited about the promises of an inspiring, international, free, and liberal faith.

Take care, stay safe, and have a peace-filled holiday.

Rev. Morgan McLean, UUPCC Board Chair  
Rev. Fred Muir, UUPCC Interim Exec. Director  
Rev. John Gibbons, PCC representative to the ICG



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**As we reach the end of 2020,  
the UUPCC wishes all our members,  
friends, and partners  
much love and peace.**



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