A View from My Window

By Rev. Roger Bertschausen, UUPCC Executive Director

The heart of the UUPCC’s mission is supporting and strengthening mutual partnerships between Unitarian/Universalist congregations in the United States and Canada and U/U congregations, schools, and orphanages elsewhere in the world.

Currently, we support around 125 partnerships between congregations in the United States and Canada with congregations, schools, and orphanages in Transylvania, Hungary, the Philippines, NE India, the UK, Kenya, and the Czech Republic.

To me, the key word in our mission is “mutual.” This word both recognizes the reality and sets the expectation that partnership is thoroughly a 2-way street. Both partners gain from the partnership. Among the gifts I most appreciate in the partnerships of which I’ve been part are:

- Spiritual deepening
- A wider sense of our U/U faith abroad and at home
- A stronger, more resilient and flexible sense of U/U history and identity
- The opportunity to practice and learn in intercultural relationships with people who are different from me but also spiritual kinfolk (which is helpful when I screw up)
- The opportunity to work on shared projects
- Sharpening the spiritual practice of fidelity (which is needed for partnerships that last for generations)
- Friendships

All these gifts depend on partnership being truly mutual. If I think that partnership is about me “helping” my partners without a sense that I get at least as much and probably more gifts back in partnership, none of the gifts I named above are possible.

The UUPCC tries to put the spirit of mutuality into everything we do—in the resources we offer partners including best practices for long and vibrant partnerships, in our UUPCC Travel Program, and in the way we work with overseas national organizations like the Hungarian Unitarian Church, the UU Church of the Philippines, and the Unitarian Union of NE India. I hope that everyone the UUPCC works with will think to themselves, “Wow, those UUPCC folks really believe in mutual partnership!” When that happens, we know we are putting our life-giving, transformative mission into action.

Thank you for joining in the UUPCC’s amazing mission! I am deeply grateful for your work in your partnerships, for your support of the UUPCC, and for walking the talk of mutual partnership.
On our UUPCC.org website, it says that “The most radical thing we can do is to introduce people to one another.” When I first thought about this quote, I thought our call was to do those introductions and then move past introductions, to go into deep relationships. Now I realize that we aren’t called to go past introductions, that isn’t at all. The call is to introduce people, to recognize what we call the “inherent worth and dignity” what others call “the divine spark” of “the spirit of the divine”, the person part of us. Not an introduction “Hi I am Andrew” but an introduction to who I am, what my story is, possibly what my dreams are and what pain I hold in my heart. Those are the people we are introducing to one another, real people. “The most radical thing we can do is introduce people to one another.”

This is my current ministry. I help introduce people between Unitarian Universalists in the United States and Unitarians/Universalists in other places in the world, mainly Transylvania, North East India, and the Philippines. So, when I say, “Let’s do a radical thing and introduce people to one another,” I mean just that. Every congregation has an opportunity to enter into relationship with a Unitarian/Universalist community in another part of the world. The opportunity is to engage with both personal and congregational deepening of faith. Meeting Unitarians in other areas of the world helps us as groups and individuals, not just to learn about history, but to learn and experience how Unitarianism/Universalism can be lived and embodied. We in the United States tend to be very good about heady religion, talking and discussing. What we sometimes fall short at is the lived faith, the faith outside of these walls and frankly, outside of our heads.
Theology is so much easier with examples. I returned from a partnership trip to India just last week with a group from Dallas, TX, who are partnered with a Children’s Village (dallasuu.org/india-partnership). Seven of us spent a week in a village so small it can’t be found on Google maps. What does that look like? It looks like being somewhat forced into intimacy. We started as strangers but from working, playing, living, worshiping, and eating together, we began to introduce ourselves to each other. Some of it was through planned activities, but the majority was being open to the humanity of each other.

Each person on that trip to India came back surer of their faith and surer of how to live it. They experienced a uniquely earth-based Unitarianism without the baggage we in the US often have around the term “God.” That’s right, nature-based Unitarianism with a theological language! And moreover, we saw and experienced a lived Unitarianism that was so deep-rooted it was beyond words and explanations. There is no secret formula for partnerships or cross-cultural/geographic relationships, but these in-person experiences are key. And this is what my ministry is now, what I can offer to you. I help show you a pathway, a door, to deeper faith and international relations.

I can’t make it happen, I can’t force introductions or deep connections. That’s on you, on each of you. And when I say it’s on you, I don’t just mean as a congregation making an international commitment. I’m talking about a religious imperative for all of us, every day! So, do that! Introduce yourselves to others. Make people wonder why you are so kind. Make people wonder why you are so open and loving. Go out into the world and be radical.

If you are interested in making the congregational or personal step into international partnership, reach out to chat! I’m best contacted via e-mail at andrew@uupcc.org.

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Travel Grant Applications Due March 15, 2020

By Rev. Roger Bertschausen, UUPCC Executive Director

The 2020 spring deadline to apply for a travel grant from the UUPCC’s Cathy Cordes Travel Fund is March 15. All applications need to be approved by the minister or the partner church committee chair of the North American partner church before submission. Contact Rev. Roger Bertschausen at roger@uupcc.org if you have questions.

For more information about the process and to download the application go to: http://www.uupcc.org/pilgrimages/travel-grants.

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PLEASE ‘ALLOW’ US!

We’d like to remind our members and friends that the UUPCC sends auto-generated emails for our membership and donation payment confirmations, as well as event registrations (trips and GA Luncheon payments), ‘membership renewal’ notices and ‘expired membership’ reminders. In addition, we distribute our electronic newsletters and event notices by email.

In order to be sure you’re receiving these important communications, please check your Spam folders and/or mark these addresses office@uupcc.org, trina@uupcc.org, and roger@uupcc.org as ‘Not Spam.’ Check out this article provided by Norton, a well-known cyber security company, for more information about safe email practices: https://www.nortonsecurityonline.com/security-center/best-email-security-practices.html.
April 2020 Partner Zoom Meeting Dates

Mark your calendars now to meet online and share updates on your partner connections. It’s a wonderful way to engage and share ideas.

NE INDIA PARTNER CONGREGATIONS
April 7, 2020
8pm Eastern / 7pm Central / 6pm Mountain / 5pm Pacific (US and Canada)

To connect to the UUPCC's Zoom account for the Indian video call from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android, click: https://zoom.us/j/452453248

One tap mobile - meeting ID: 452 453 248
+16468769923,,452453248# US (New York)
+16699006833,,452453248# US (San Jose)

Or by telephone: (for higher quality, dial number based on your current location)
Dial by your location - meeting ID: 452 453 248
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

PHILIPPINES PARTNER CONGREGATIONS
April 21, 2020
8pm Eastern / 7pm Central / 6pm Mountain / 5pm Pacific (US and Canada)

To connect to the UUPCC's Zoom account for the Philippines video call from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android, click: https://zoom.us/j/295599091

One tap mobile - meeting ID: 295 599 091
+16468769923,,295599091# US (New York)
+16699006833,,295599091# US (San Jose)

Or by telephone: (for higher quality, dial number based on your current location)
Dial by your location - meeting ID: 295 599 091
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
TRANSYLVANIA PARTNER CONGREGATIONS

(Two meeting opportunities)
Meeting #1 - April 14, 2020
8pm Eastern / 7pm Central / 6pm Mountain / 5pm Pacific (US and Canada)

To connect to the UUPCC’s Zoom account for the first Transylvanian video call from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android, click: https://zoom.us/j/345679155

One tap mobile - meeting ID: 345 679 155
+16468769923,,345679155# US (New York)
+16699006833,,345679155# US (San Jose)

Or by telephone: (for higher quality, dial number based on your current location)
Dial by your location - meeting ID: 345 679 155
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting #2 – April 30, 2020
8pm Eastern / 7pm Central / 6pm Mountain / 5pm Pacific (US and Canada)

To connect to the UUPCC’s Zoom account for the second Transylvanian video call from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android, click: https://zoom.us/j/394769348

One tap mobile - meeting ID: 394 769 348
+16468769923,,394769348# US (New York)
+16699006833,,394769348# US (San Jose)

Or by telephone: (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location)
Dial by your location - Meeting ID: 394 769 348
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Find your local number for any of these calls at: https://zoom.us/u/ad27oFezsA

Questions? Contact Rev. Roger Bertschausen (roger@uupcc.org)
or Trina Priese (trina@uupcc.org)
General Assembly Preview

By Rev. Roger Bertschausen, UUPCC Executive Director

The UU Partner Church Council will once again have a strong presence at GA. This year’s GA will take place from June 24-28 in Providence, RI. A centerpiece of our programming will again be our Annual Luncheon and Annual Meeting. We have requested our usual Friday (June 26) from 12:00 to 1:30 PM timeslot but haven’t yet heard if we’re able to get this time.

In addition to having our booth in the exhibit hall, we’ll participate in a 150-minute workshop on colonialism with the UUA International Office and the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU), as well as attend an international reception. Together with the UUA International Office, we are hosting a special showing of a new film on Friday, June 26. The film, which is about Unitarian Universalists in the Philippines, will be shown from 9:30-11:00 AM at the First Unitarian of Providence, which is a 15-minute walk from the convention center. An informal Partnership Q&A session will also be scheduled with details forthcoming.

More specifics about our partnership events will be featured in our April and June newsletters. We hope to see many of you at GA!

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Do You Have a Partnership Story to Share?

We’d love to hear from you. Please email your stories and pictures and we’ll try to feature them on our website or in our newsletters.

Email to: office@uupcc.org

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2019 TAXABLE DONATION LETTERS UPDATE:

Dear valued members and donors, we recently sent some 2019 taxable deduction letters dated January 2020 that contain this statement: "Thank you for your total contributions in 2018 of ($ amount)". The year (2018) should have shown as 2019. The rest of the dates in the letter are accurate. We’re sorry for this error. If you would like to receive a corrected letter, please contact Trina at trina@uupcc.org and she will reply with it attached.
The Hungarian Unitarian Church and the UUPCC present:

2020 ROOTS PILGRIMAGE
July 13 - 20, 2020

A joint project of the Hungarian Unitarian Church and the UU Partner Church Council, the ROOTS pilgrimage provides a unique opportunity for both laity and clergy from Unitarian churches in Transylvania and North American UUs to explore our shared religious heritage along with our distinctive spiritual, cultural and theological beliefs, values and traditions.

Through presentations, panel discussions, small group conversations and shared spiritual practices, participants explore large spiritual themes. Travelers will engage with activities and discussions focusing on beliefs about birth/origin, development through relationships, finding fulfillment, and death/grief. Pilgrimage begins and ends in Cluj/Kolozsvár with visits to Verespatak/Rosia Montana gold mining area as well as Torda and other villages.

Registration Deadline
March 17, 2020

Registration link: https://uupcc.z2systems.com/eventReg.jsp?event=618&

PILGRIMAGE COST
$999 + $250 non-refundable registration fee. (Double occupancy required except for 2 nights in Kolozsvár for $80 single supplement)
Airfare not included.

The Hungarian Unitarian Church and the UUPCC believe that sharing our cultural, spiritual and theological understandings with one another enhances our lives and deepens the spiritual journeys of self and other. These values have guided the development of the Roots Pilgrimage.

Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council
483 E. Lockwood Ave
Suite 109
St. Louis, MO 63119
Phone: 314-918-2618
JOIN REV. DR. DAVID USHER ON A FASCINATING EXPLORATION OF UNITARIANISM IN BRITAIN

FEBRUARY 17th - MARCH 1st 2021

British Unitarianism enjoys a rich history spanning almost 350 years, and its churches are amongst the country’s finest examples of nonconformist architecture. British Unitarians are known for the warmth of their welcome, especially to their American counterparts.

Our journey begins in Southeast England attending the annual FUSE Festival (Festival of Unitarians in the South East). We’ll spend the weekend taking part in interesting and engaging workshops and sessions based around the themes of spirituality, community, social action, creativity and music, as well as having ample time to mingle and socialize with our British UU cousins.

Leaving the southeast, we head north to Oxford, city of dreaming spires and ancient seat of learning. A walking tour of the city center highlights the historic, architecturally stunning colleges. We have a special visit to Harris Manchester College, one of England’s two Unitarian training colleges, and also a tour of nearby Blenheim palace, the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. We continue north through the stunningly beautiful Peak District National Park and finally wend our way south, to London - a hotbed of non-conformist activity in the 18th century.

Our travels will take us to magnificent stately homes, friendly country pubs, fascinating museums and gorgeous countryside - and all with a backdrop of Unitarian history and tradition. Your guide will be the Rev. Dr. David Usher, a graduate of Oxford University with 35 years as a UU minister in both England and the US, as well as previous experience leading several tours. The Reverend David Usher is uniquely qualified to introduce you to British Unitarianism.

Join fellow Unitarian Universalists on an English pilgrimage, visiting some of its finest churches, historic religious sites, and most beautiful cities and landscapes. This trip is operated by Discover Europe with the endorsement of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council.

THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

- LAND only (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED): $4180
- SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: $990

Airfares are available from most U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

- HOTELS: 11 nights’ accommodation in first-class hotels, including all hotel taxes and service charges
- COACHING: All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- MEALS: Full breakfast daily, 2 lunches, 7 dinners
- GUIDES: Reverend David Usher throughout, local guides at Chatsworth & Blenheim Palace
- BAGGAGE: Porterage of one large suitcase per person
- TICKETS: Best seats for the theater in Stratford-upon-Avon
- WEEKEND pass to the FUSE Festival

Entrances: Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be mailed to each registrant on receipt of deposit.

Click [here](https://www.uupcc.org) to see more information or register for England 2021.
Cross-Cultural Storytelling: An Exciting Approach to Building Connections

By Tina Main, Fox Valley UU Fellowship, Appleton, WI

Tell me a story. Stories are central to how we relate to one another. They help communicate events and feelings, teach lessons, elucidate concepts, and keep us pondering great mysteries. So, when I saw an article about cross-cultural storytelling, I thought this would be a great way to build relationships with our partner churches. To begin this adventure, we would start a story in our congregation at Fox Valley UU Fellowship (FVUUF) in Appleton, Wisconsin. Then, we would finish it partway until the story reached a climax and send it to our partners in Banaybanay, Philippines and Deva, Transylvania. Our partner churches would complete the story and send it back to Appleton. In this way, we would increase communication and connection while deepening our relationships. Cross-cultural storytelling started as a tiny spark of an idea and grew into a great project.

The most important part of this project was to ask our partners if they were indeed interested in participating in cross-cultural storytelling. I contacted both partners and received enthusiastic replies, so the project was set in motion. Kim Hartman, DRE at FVUUF, provided excellent guidance in choosing a theme of building trust and friendship. We agreed that animals should be the central characters and perhaps they would experience some extraordinary adventures while caught in a huge storm. Two animals that are common to the Philippines, Transylvania, and the United States are wild boars and rabbits. Voilà, the characters, theme, and action were chosen.

The story was taking shape. The next step required involvement of the children. We met with the children in their religious education classes to brainstorm the rest of the story. The children gave wonderful ideas about how the animals would feel, why they were in the forest, what might happen in the storm, and how they would meet. I took their ideas and wove them into a story that would be interesting and engaging. An artist from our congregation, Cindy Darling, drew sketches of the wild boar and rabbit characters so the children could color them to illustrate the story.

The final elements of the project included presenting the story to the children, coloring the illustrations, making any final edits, and then sending the story to our partner churches in Banaybanay, Philippines and Deva, Transylvania. The project has reached its midpoint, and now we await the results. We will report back to you when the story is finished.
More information about the cross-cultural storytelling project is available on the UUPCC website at https://uupcc.org/resources-partners/religious-education-resources, as shown under the Reading Lists, RE, and Other Resources tab.

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**Zoom-ing in on Partnerships!**

*By Denton Crews, King’s Chapel, Boston, MA*

Two historic Unitarian churches launched a new phase of communications as partner churches on Sunday, January 19, connected on the Internet by Zoom video and audio conferencing. That evening, at 8 pm Eastern European Time, the partner church committee of First Unitarian Kolozsvár originated the conference, and simultaneously that afternoon in Boston at 1 pm Eastern Standard Time, King’s Chapel’s committee joined the meeting. There were 8 parishioners at each location: the Bishop’s Conference Room in the headquarters of the Consistory of the Transylvanian Unitarian Churches and a second floor classroom in the Parish House of King’s Chapel.

The primary reason for the video meeting was to launch a planning process to celebrate the 100th anniversary of “sister churches,” as they were originally called. The relationship began with visits to Transylvania between 1920 and 1922 after WW I’s devastation. Reciprocal visits mostly took place later in the century, from 1978 until today. The partnership became one of the first between international Unitarian churches, a model now replicated with many other congregations.

The video meeting began with greetings by each of the ministers, Rev. Norbert Rácz and Rev. Joy Fallon. This was followed by introductory statements from each participant in Kolozsvár and Boston. The discussion focused initially on proposals for 2 trips: 1) a visit by King’s Chapel people to Transylvania in 2021, perhaps in late-spring or early-summer, and 2) a visit by First Unitarian people to Boston in 2022. The conversation then turned to a discussion suggested by the ministers, namely the opportunity for building a strong relationship between people in each location using video conferencing via the Internet (Zoom), scheduling regular meetings with one another, sharing experiences and perspectives, discussing matters of faith, planning activities, and preparing for the celebratory trips.

The meeting continued for 1 hour and 15 minutes with participants agreeing that it was well organized and moderated, as well as engaging and productive. Suggestions were offered for future meetings: delving into historical roots, theology, and liturgy; sharing how we deal with specific issues; learning about our church experiences in each congregation; and doing “something together.” The 2 committees decided to reconvene with scheduled meetings and topics for discussion.
Monte Vista - Calapayan 2019 Partner Report

Editor’s note: This piece submitted by Julie Steinbach is a history of Monte Vista UU Congregation’s partnership with the UU congregation in Calapayan in the Philippines.

Julie Steinbach reporting from Monte Vista UU Congregation with great delight! Click here to see the most comprehensive, thoughtful, and entertaining report we have ever received from our partners at Calapayan. The complete history of the congregation surprised us, and all the pictures made us smile. Huge Salamats (thank you's) to our youth leader Doni Gino, a recent college graduate who’s employed as an engineer by the City of Bayawan - and Calapayan's committed student in the UUCP's Ministerial Formation Program. We are gratified that his leadership is ensuring the growth and viability of the congregation and UUism in the larger San Rafael Barangay community.
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