

# Transylvania Pilgrimage, June 2017

Detailed information sheet, as of 12/14/16

## **Basic Trip Itinerary**                      **June 20 – July 3 (14 days, 13 nights)**                      **\$1,299**

\$1,149 double occupancy, plus the \$150 non-refundable registration fee (see note 1)

Add \$210 for single room option (see note 2)

INCLUDES: accommodation, ground transportation, most meals, group activities and entry fees, tour guides

Does NOT include: international airfare, alcohol, 1 lunch, 2 dinners, tips, optional activities, transfer to departure airport  
(*this is a draft – there may be slight changes to this itinerary, including timing, concerts, venues and hotels*)

### Tuesday, June 20

Depart Vancouver, BC 4:20pm, fly to Bucharest, Romania on Lufthansa Airlines via Frankfurt

### Wednesday, June 21

Arrive Bucharest Airport (OTP) 5:35pm. Transfer to 3-Star Hotel Herastrau

Independent travelers meet group at hotel by 6pm. Welcome & group dinner with UUPCC staff. (D)

### Thursday, June 22

Morning guided bus and walking tour of Bucharest including Parliament, Metropolitan Church & embassy district.

Group lunch. 2-hour bus ride to Carpathian resort town of Sinaia. Free time to stroll, shop, or visit the nearby Orthodox monastery. Group dinner & overnight. Hotel Caraiman\*\*\* (BLD)

### Friday, June 23

Morning guided tour of Peles Castle, summer palace of the Romanian royal family. 1.5-hour bus ride to Bran. Group lunch, tour Bran Castle – aka “Dracula’s Castle” Free time to shop for tasteless souvenirs. 1-hour bus ride to Brasov. Tour Black Church, the largest cathedral between Istanbul and Vienna, housing the largest oriental rug collection in Europe.

Stroll through the pedestrian city center before continuing on the bus to Sepsiszentgyorgy Unitarian church.

Dinner with minister & members of the congregation. First of 2 nights at Hotel Park\*\*\* in Sepsiszentgyorgy (BLD)

### Saturday, June 24

The choir will devote most of the day to rehearsal and activities with the Superar Childrens Choir in Zizin.

Other activities may include the following, especially for those members of our group who are not in choir:

- tour Saxon fortress in Prejmer
- visit extensive Szekely Museum and Women's craft cooperative

6pm ***Concert with Superar Children's Choir in Sacele*** Group dinner (BLD)

### Sunday, June 25

1-hour bus ride to Unitarian village of Nagyajta. 11am service at Nagyajta Unitarian church, followed by

***Joint concert with Nagyajta chorus.*** Lunch/reception hosted by Unitarian Women’s League

2-hour bus ride to Szekelykeresztur, Dinner, and first of 4 nights at Unitarian Guest House. (BLD)

### Monday, June 26

Morning tour of frescoed Unitarian church in village of Szekelyderzs (UNESCO Heritage site).

Lunch, free time in Szekelyudvarhely (market town). Dinner back in Szekelykeresztur. (BLD)

### Tuesday, June 27

Morning rehearsal, then 1-hour bus trip to craft village of Korond, then group lunch in Szekelyudvarhely.

Afternoon free time. 6pm ***Concert at Szekelykeresztur Unitarian Church,*** dinner with congregation. (BLD)

### Wednesday, June 28

Morning trip to Saxon fortress church at Biertan (UNESCO site),

Proceed to Sighisoara, the purported birthplace of Vlad Tepes (Dracula).

Orientation session in citadel of Sighisoara, free time to explore town, shop, and visit attractions.

Lunch on own. Afternoon departure for Unitarian village of Simenfalva.

6 pm ***Concert in Simenfalva Unitarian Church*** followed by reception & group dinner at church

Return to Szekelykeresztur for final night at Unitarian guest house. (BD)

### Thursday, June 29

1.5-hour bus trip to Marosvasarhely. Walking tour of historic city-center, including Teleki Library, Transylvania's oldest public library and home to one of the world's great rare book collections.

Also see the spectacular Art Nouveau Cultural Palace. Group lunch, then continue to Cluj.

Stop enroute at the "Church of the Edict" in Torda. where the first act of religious tolerance was signed in 1568

(basic trip itinerary Thursday, June 29 continued)

Dinner and 1<sup>st</sup> of 4 nights in Cluj at Unitarian Center for Students & Pilgrims (UCSP), or choose optional upgrade to stay at Hotel Victoria (see note 2). (BLD)

Friday, June 30

Morning walking tour of Cluj Unitarian sites, including the Unitarian High School & Headquarters, St. Michael's Cathedral, First Unitarian Church, home to the legendary Rock of Francis David, where he "converted the whole town to Unitarianism." Group lunch, then bus to partner village of Magyarszovat, welcome reception with minister & church leaders. Group dinner before returning to Cluj. (BLD)

Saturday, July 1

Full day with Magyarszovat partner church with their minister as our guide  
Schedule to be determined with our partner congregation, possibly including community service.  
Lunch in the village. Dinner on your own in Cluj. (BL)

Sunday, July 2

11am service followed by **Concert at Magyarszovat Unitarian Church**,  
Reception, group lunch & farewell celebration before returning to Cluj. Time to rest and repack.  
Dinner on own. 8pm folklore and dance program (farewell event of basic trip). (BL)

Monday, July 3

Pilgrims choosing 3-day post-trip extension to Budapest depart from Cluj by bus (see separate itinerary below).  
Pilgrims returning home depart from Cluj airport at 6:25am, arrive Vancouver BC at 2:25pm via Munich and Frankfurt  
Or Pilgrims may head into Europe on their own, adapting their return itinerary as they choose (B)

**Budapest Post-trip Extension                      July 3 - July 6 (4 days/3 nights)                      add \$575**

Based on double occupancy (add another \$125 for a single room).

INCLUDES: ground transportation, 3 nights in 4-Star Hotel Belvedere, 4 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner, fees & tours

Does NOT include: international airfare, alcohol, tips, 2 lunches, 2 dinners, optional free-time activities

Monday, July 3

Bus travel day from Cluj to Budapest. Traditional lunch at border. Group dinner. Overnight 4-star Hotel Belvedere (BLD)

Tuesday, July 4

Morning guided bus & walking tour of Budapest highlights: Castle Hill, Hero's Square & Jewish Quarter. Intro to Metro system and help buying Metro passes. Free afternoon/evening in Budapest to explore, shop, visit museums, and maybe attend a concert or folklore show. Lunch & dinner on your own. (B)

Wednesday, July 5

Optional guided morning visit to "Shoe Memorial" and stroll around Parliament.

Otherwise free day for sightseeing, dining, and/or to experience one of the city's famous thermal spas. (B)

Monday, July 6

Bus to Budapest airport to fly home to Vancouver BC (B)

Or Pilgrims may head into Europe on their own, adapting their return itinerary as they choose

*Note 1 The \$150 non-refundable UUPCC registration fee pays for your membership in the UUPCC, the cost of processing your application & mailing your travel packet, and an impact fee paid to the Transylvanian Unitarian Church.*

*Note 2 The \$210 supplement for single rooms throughout the basic trip includes an upgrade for the 4 nights in Cluj from the U. Center for Students & Pilgrims (UCSP) to the 3-Star Hotel Victoria, as single rooms are not available at UCSP. Double occupancy travelers may also choose this upgrade in Cluj only by selecting the \$80 "deluxe" option while completing the online registration.*

*The UCSP is a modern dormitory-style facility located in the attic of the Unitarian high school building. There is an elevator. Some rooms have AC. All have private baths. There are no TVs. Breakfast is served in the school cafeteria which is located in the basement of the building. There is also a possibility for 5-10 of our group to stay overnight in our partner village of Magyarszovat on Fri & Sat nights.*

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### WHO IS INVITED

All adult members of the greater BUF community, plus relatives and friends, are invited. We are also promoting this trip among neighboring UU congregations, and we encourage everybody at BUF - choir members and non-choir members – to promote it among their own families, friends and wider UU connections.

### TRANSYLVANIA RETREAT AT BUF, MAY 6 & 7, 2017

All those who will be traveling with us are encouraged to attend our Transylvania Trip Retreat on May 6 & 7. From 2-9pm on Saturday at BUF, we will do fun activities to bond with each other, learn about and finalize plans for the trip, have dinner together and to sing. Special guest and former BUF choir director Tim Fitzpatrick will lead our group in learning some quick and easy songs that we will all be able to sing on the road at the drop of a hat, like after dinner at some church in Romania.

The singing is voluntary, and people can participate up to the level that they feel comfortable. When we are performing in Romania, we hope that the members of our group who are not in choir will join the choir on a few songs at our concerts. Songs that even the shyest singers might learn could include: Goodnight Sweetheart, The Happy Wanderer, Lean On Me, and some simple rounds and spirituals. We'll call our full traveling group the "Pilgrims Chorus."

On Sunday May 7 our "Pilgrims Chorus" will rehearse at 9:30am then sing for the 10:30am BUF service.

### LODGING IN ROMANIA

When not in hotels our lodging is in dorms and guesthouses (no sleeping bags needed). Dorms can have as many as four flights of stairs and sleeping in bunks, with a few beds to a room (a couple or a family can often have their own room). Some places are air-conditioned; others are not. An accommodation upgrade to always stay in hotels is available for an additional fee. If anyone wants a single room, they can request this upgrade. People select roommates when they register.

### SUPERAR CHILDRENS CHOIR PROGRAMME IN BRASOV

Our choir members can look forward to the incredible blessing of a choral exchange workshop and joint concert with the Superar Childrens Choirs in Brasov. Superar uses choir singing to encourage social acceptance and inclusion between Romanian, Hungarian and Roma children in the Brasov area. Elana Andrews is their acclaimed Australian-born coordinator and choir director in Transylvania. Kevin and Elana have been coordinating the exchange by email and have chosen a number of songs that our choirs will know to perform together. As part of our own service outreach for this trip, we are happy to support Superar's aims. You can find information about Superar's international program at [www.superar.eu](http://www.superar.eu) For specific Brasov info, check facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/SuperarRomania/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/SuperarRomania/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)

### TRAVELING IN ROMANIA

\* Romania is the last wild place in Europe and very beautiful.

\* US citizens need passports to travel in Romania, but no visa. You need a passport number to register with UUPCC online.

\* It can be quite hot, in the 90s in June, but the country is at 2,000 - 4,000 foot elevation, so summer evenings are lovely.

### IS THIS TRIP FOR CHILDREN?

This trip is not recommended or designed for children under 16, though some kids will love it. Considerations: lots of talks, tours, and churches; boring bus rides, impact on the other passengers; no allowance for picky eaters. The child price, assuming children room with their parents, is typically 60% for food/lodging (airfare and other costs are at full rate). Villages can be fun for children, where they are safe and able to roam. The trip will work best for calm, self-directed children who are willing to experiment and good at entertaining themselves.

### SPECIAL NEEDS

\* Everyone must be able to walk for 30 minutes and climb four flights of stairs. This trip is not possible for people with wheelchairs or wheeled walkers (canes are OK), or with environmental allergies to things like dust, grass, etc

\* Not for vegans or people with strict regimens or serious allergies.

\* Some accommodations are possible for gluten-free, lactose intolerant and vegetarian, but not always.

\* We will be eating group meals in restaurants, church halls, etc. All meals will be ordered for the group in advance. There will be no menus to choose from, except for meals you get on your own.

### SERVICE PROJECT

We plan to do a service project with our partner church. We will only have a day or half a day to do it, and it is likely to be a clean up type project like clearing a stream bed, clearing a cemetery of brush/trash, cleaning a garden, etc.

### CULTURE & LANGUAGE

English is spoken widely by students and those with more education, but not by most older villagers

We will have skilled interpreters along, sometimes including high school students as translators

Hungarian is what is spoken in the homes, so if we have a little class to learn some phrases, we should learn Hungarian

## PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

### Payment Process For INTERNATIONAL AIRFARE Arranged By Golden Rule Travel

Travelers pay a fully refundable \$200 deposit to reserve one of the 50 tickets that we are holding as a group booking. Those using the group booking will travel together on Lufthansa Airlines, as follows:

To Europe	Vancouver BC-Frankfurt	June 20	LH 493	16:20-11:00 (arriving June 21)
	Frankfurt-Bucharest	June 21	LH 1420	14:20-17:35
From Europe	Cluj-Munich	July 3	LH 1673	06:25-07:10
	Munich-Frankfurt	July 3	LH 101	10:00-11:00
	Frankfurt-Van BC	July 3	LH 492	13:30-14:25

The full airfare there and back costs \$1,475.

*Please give a \$200 deposit check, payable to BUF Choir, to choir treasurer Carl Nyblade asap, and he will give you a receipt.*

The return itinerary for 30% of the total number of group tickets that are eventually used can be modified to suit individual travel, on a first come, first served basis. Those who choose the Budapest post-trip extension should request this option.

*When you pay your deposit, tell Carl whether you wish to deviate your return itinerary or not (just say yes or no)*

January, 2017	Kevin will gather the requests for return flight deviations that people have made up to this point, and forward them together to the travel agent. The agent will begin processing the requests, and confirm flight arrangements with travelers individually. <i>Note: Your airfare may cost more or less if deviate your return flights, depending on your itinerary.</i>
March 1, 2017	Deadline to make the \$200 airfare deposit to BUF to reserve a seat in the group booking
March 20	The \$200 deposit will not be refundable for cancelations made after this date.
May 1	Full remaining airfare due with passenger names and exact itineraries

#### Note on making airline arrangements:

*People can choose to make their own flight arrangements, and just join us Wednesday evening, June 21 in Bucharest and leave us in Cluj on July 3. The benefit of joining the group booking is not that it will be the best price that you can find, but that you can reserve a seat to travel with the full group by putting down a fully refundable deposit. FYI - Traveling together provides convenience in getting to and from airports and connecting with our land itinerary. To save a few hundred bucks, people might buy their own cheaper tickets, only to find that they have lousy connections, lose what they saved to pay for hotels, or they have to add a day-long bus ride, or sleep in the airport or something.*

### Payment Process For LAND TRAVEL Arranged By UUPCC (UU Partner Church Council)

Travelers register individually online for the basic land trip by going to the UUPCC website: [www.uupcc.org](http://www.uupcc.org)

Click on "Pilgrimages" and select "Group Pilgrimages" from the drop-down menu.

Scroll to the bottom of the page and enter 3441055 in the field entitled "Register code"

Click on the "register" button and you will be taken to a webpage specifically designed for the Bellingham tour.

You will need to enter your passport number

All of the choices for travel will be electable in that process, including upgrades, single or double occupancy, roommates, Budapest extension, etc. Travelers pay a non-refundable \$150 registration fee online by credit card when they register. Further detailed information is posted on that site about the registration and payment process.

March 21, 2017	Registration is closed and a trip packet with information, luggage tags and your bill is sent out.
April 7, 2017	Final payment due for remaining costs (\$1,149 for the basic trip, double occupancy)

#### Financing/Scholarships/Fundraising

Every effort has been made to plan this pilgrimage on a budget basis to make it affordable for as many people as possible.

Here's how the costs stack up:	Group Airfare	\$1,475
	Basic trip, double occupancy (incl. registration fee)	\$1,299
	Possible minimum extra costs	<u>\$ 200</u>
	TOTAL	\$2,974 What a deal!!!

The cost of airfare and land package are covered and incorporated into the overall group costs for director/trip leader Kevin Allen-Schmid and accompanist Melanie Rieck.

The choir committee has established a Transylvania pilgrimage scholarship scheme; please see the separate document with application and information. Fundraisers are being held and donations to the scholarship fund are being solicited to build up this fund. In any case, though, scholarship assistance is not a given, and if given, it may not be for a substantial amount. Pilgrims are also encouraged to find ways to assist one another financially without involving the committee.