Transylvania Gate/ Székelykapu Dedication

Unity Church–Unitarian
Saturday, September 6, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.

This gate, installed September 6, 2025, symbolizes the ongoing friendship between Unity Church Unitarian and the Unitarian Congregation of Homoródszentpéter over the last thirty-five years. The gate pays tribute to the memory of Reverends Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs and initiators Tibor and Olga Zoltai and expresses confidence that our two communities will have a future both on their own and together.

Ez a kapu, mely 2025. szeptember 6-án állítódott, a Unity Church-Unitarian és a Homoródszentpéteri Unitárius Egyházközség között harmincöt éve fennálló barátságot szimbolizálja. A kapu tisztelettel adózik Rob és Janne Eller- Isaacs tiszteletesek, valamint Tibor és Olga Zoltai kezdeményezők emlékének, valamint kifejezi azt a bizodalmat, hogy a két közösségnek önállóan és együttesen is lesz jövője.

PROGRAM

Introduction
Christoph Meyer-Grimberg and Rene Meyer-Grimberg, Unity Church Partner Church Team

Welcome Remarks
Mary Baremore, Chair, Unity Church Board of Trustees

The Ministry of Revs. Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs
Barbara Hubbard, Unity Church Executive Director Emerita

Musical Interlude
Ethnic Dance Theater and Szászka Folk Music Band
Performing: Szatmári Táncok – Szatmári Dances

Welcome Remarks
Gabriella Sinka Heath, President of The Minnesota Hungarians

Greetings
Dr. Balázs Mártonffy, Consul-General of Hungary, Chicago

Greetings
Csilla Grauzer, Honorary Consul of Hungary to Minnesota

Musical Interlude
Ethnic Dance Theater and Szászka Folk Music Band
Performing: Örkői Táncok – Örkői Dances

Enduring Partnership
Rev. Kinga-Réka Székely, Senior Minister, Homoródszentpéter

The Future of Partnership
Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister, Unity Church

Benediction
Revs. Sinclair and Székely

Postlude
Béke Dal, led by Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries, and Unity Church Pick-up Choir

Reception in Parish Hall, immediately after the postlude.
Please visit the display of Partner Church history in Robbins Parlor (second floor).

PARTNER CHURCH TEAM

After the fall of the Ceauşescu dictatorship in 1989, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in the U.S. asked congregations to form partnerships with Unitarian churches in the Transylvania region of Romania. The struggling congregations needed help to rebuild themselves after a half-century of war and repression. The UUA recognized that its fundamental doctrinal belief that "God is One and Indivisible" began in Transylvania in the 1560s during the Protestant Reformation, when Rev. Dávid Ferenc/Francis David worked out the principles of Unitarianism.

In 1990, the UUA asked Unity Church–Unitarian of Saint Paul, Minnesota, to build a partner relationship with the Hungarian Unitarian Church of Homoródszentpéter, Romania. Some members of Unity Church traveled to Transylvania in the early and mid-1990s and helped with economic development projects. The partnership between the two churches became more established with new ministers in Homoródszentpéter (Rev. Kinga- Réka Székely in 1995) and in Saint Paul (Revs. Robert Eller-Isaacs and Janne Eller-Isaacs in 2000). The ministers have led pilgrimages between Minnesota and Transylvania, with pilgrims from both churches learning about our shared faith and worshipping together.

The phrase "Don't be afraid, just have faith" was suggested as a motto for our partnership by Rev. Kinga- Réka Székely, minister at Homoródszentpéter, in a sermon preached to the congregation of Homoródszentpéter and a group of Unity Church pilgrims in August 2001.

We have leaned into the "faith" and away from being "afraid" over the ensuing years and gather here with our friends to thank them for the gift of this *szekelykapur* as a symbol of our connection. As Reverend Oscar said in his welcoming words to the Transylvanian visitors this year: "The best of religion is what happens when we gather together and have quiet moments over tea or coffee where we can just be human together and see where that leads."

Unity Church-Unitarian
Partner Church Webpage

Unity Church-Unitarian
Partner Church Vimeo Channel

TRANSYLVANIA GATE / *SZÉKELYKAPU*

A Transylvania or *Szekély* [pron. SEH kay] gate (Hungarian: *székelykapu*) is made of solid oak, weighs up to 200 kilograms, and is lovingly carved with images from Transylvania. These gates were first reserved for the land-owning gentry at the time of the Protestant Reformation but eventually became widespread among rural families. The *székelykapuk* stand for centuries, sometimes, many centuries.

Revs. Robert and Janne Eller-Isaacs visited the village for the last time in 2019 and as an expression of thanks for the years of commitment to the partnership, the people of Homoródszentpéter commissioned a *székelykapu* to honor their ministry.

The gift of a gate from one Unitarian church in Transylvania, Romania, to another Unitarian church in Minnesota is meant to symbolize a solid friendship starting in the 20th century and the promise of its continuation into the 21st century and beyond.

Homoródszentpéter Parsonage Door

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