
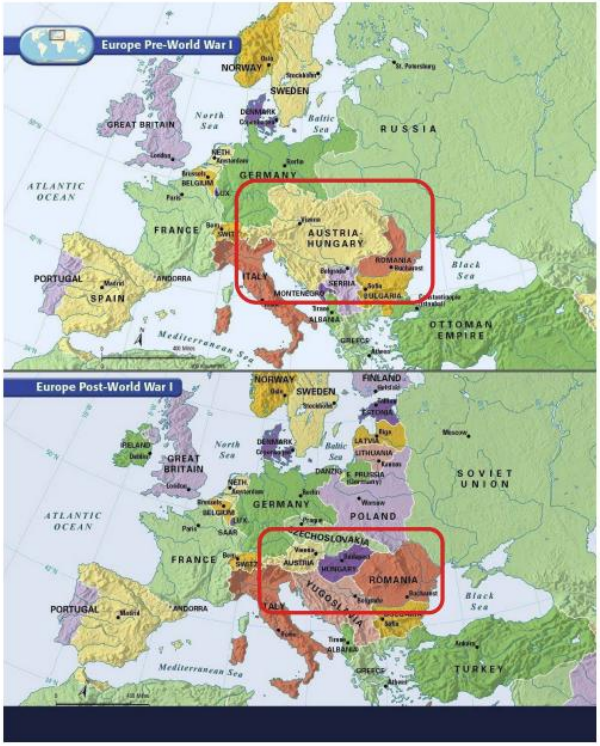



Timeline of the Partner Church Relationship between Unity Church Unitarian in St. Paul, MN and Homoródszentpéter in Transylvania



As of April 2026

Date	Event
1526	Bell Tower of the Catholic church in Homoródszentpéter is constructed. The oldest parts of the church date back to the 13th Century. 
1568	Edict of Torda: Transylvanian King John Sigismund authorizes local communities to freely elect their preachers. The monarch's antitrinitarian court preacher Francis Dávid promotes Unitarianism ("EGY AZ ISTEN / God is one").
1571	Death of John Sigismund and beginning of recatholization in Transylvania under subsequent rulers.
1579	Francis Dávid (Dávid Ferenc), imprisoned for his objection to the worship of Christ, dies at Deva Citadel.
End of 16th Century	Regional leader Kornis and the Catholic church in Homoródszentpéter convert to Unitarianism.
1920	Treaty of Trianon: At the end of WWI, Hungary loses 2/3 of its territory and 1/2 of its population; Transylvania becomes part of Romania. 




Legend:

Unity/HSP Specific Events	World events	Unity trips to HSP	HSP trips to Unity
---------------------------	--------------	--------------------	--------------------



1936	Arthur Foote (Unity Minister from 1945 – 1970) spends 5 months in Europe to meet Unitarian leaders in Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Holland, England, and Ireland.																																																																
1947	Communist rule begins in Romania. Persecution of Unitarian Church officials and ministers includes imprisonment.																																																																
1956	The Unitarian Service Committee, under the leadership of Arthur Foote, raises funds to support Hungarian refugees fleeing the aftermath of the Hungarian Uprising.																																																																
1988	 <p>Concerns grow internationally about the cultural genocide of minorities in Transylvania, particularly affecting the Hungarian Unitarian community.</p>																																																																
1988	<p>Hungarian Human Rights Foundation Post Office Box "J," Gracie Station New York, New York 10028 (212) 289-5488 September 15, 1988</p> <p>Villages in Harghita (Harghita) County, Rumania to Be Destroyed Under the So-Called "Territorial Systematization" Plan*</p> <p>A. Rural Areas</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="846 1371 1451 1686"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="2">Population</th> <th colspan="2">No. of Farms</th> </tr> <tr> <th>1966</th> <th>1987</th> <th>1966</th> <th>1987</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>Kászonalitz (Plaiesi de Jos)</i></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Kászonimpér (Impér)</td> <td>706</td> <td>485</td> <td>-</td> <td>253</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Kászonjakabfalva (Iacobeni)</td> <td>737</td> <td>465</td> <td>-</td> <td>263</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Kászonfeltiz (Plaiesi de sus)</td> <td>1061</td> <td>716</td> <td>-</td> <td>329</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Homoródszentmárton (Martinis)</i></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Homoródremete (Calugareni)</td> <td>185</td> <td>96</td> <td>-</td> <td>69</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Kénos (Chinusu)</td> <td>269</td> <td>150</td> <td>-</td> <td>97</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Gyepes (Ghipes)</td> <td>331</td> <td>210</td> <td>-</td> <td>128</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Lókód (Locodeni)</td> <td>170</td> <td>54</td> <td>-</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Homoródszentpéter (Petreni)</td> <td>276</td> <td>182</td> <td>-</td> <td>101</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Recsenyéd (Bares)</td> <td>243</td> <td>203</td> <td>-</td> <td>92</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Homoródszentpéter (Petreni) is among villages in Harghita County, Romania to be destroyed under the so-called "Territorial Systematization" plan.</p>		Population		No. of Farms		1966	1987	1966	1987	<i>Kászonalitz (Plaiesi de Jos)</i>					Kászonimpér (Impér)	706	485	-	253	Kászonjakabfalva (Iacobeni)	737	465	-	263	Kászonfeltiz (Plaiesi de sus)	1061	716	-	329	<i>Homoródszentmárton (Martinis)</i>					Homoródremete (Calugareni)	185	96	-	69	Kénos (Chinusu)	269	150	-	97	Gyepes (Ghipes)	331	210	-	128	Lókód (Locodeni)	170	54	-	58	Homoródszentpéter (Petreni)	276	182	-	101	Recsenyéd (Bares)	243	203	-	92
	Population		No. of Farms																																																														
	1966	1987	1966	1987																																																													
<i>Kászonalitz (Plaiesi de Jos)</i>																																																																	
Kászonimpér (Impér)	706	485	-	253																																																													
Kászonjakabfalva (Iacobeni)	737	465	-	263																																																													
Kászonfeltiz (Plaiesi de sus)	1061	716	-	329																																																													
<i>Homoródszentmárton (Martinis)</i>																																																																	
Homoródremete (Calugareni)	185	96	-	69																																																													
Kénos (Chinusu)	269	150	-	97																																																													
Gyepes (Ghipes)	331	210	-	128																																																													
Lókód (Locodeni)	170	54	-	58																																																													
Homoródszentpéter (Petreni)	276	182	-	101																																																													
Recsenyéd (Bares)	243	203	-	92																																																													
1989	<p>The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), under President William F. Schulz, initiates a sister church program to support Transylvanian Unitarian churches.</p> <p>End of the Ceaușescu regime in Romania.</p>																																																																



<p>1989</p>		<p>Olga and Tibor Zoltai, Hungarian Unitarians, brief Unitarian ministers about the plight of Romanian Unitarians, highlighting the destruction of their heritage. Unity Church holds a fundraiser to support Romanian Unitarian refugees fleeing persecution.</p>
<p>1990</p>	<p>UUA assigns Homoródszentpéter as Sister Church to Unity.</p> <p>The PCT sends the first letter to the minister of Homoródszentpéter church. After several attempts, they receive a response from Ödön Jakab, a retired schoolteacher, who becomes the primary correspondent.</p> <p>Unity Church, under Rev. Roy D. Phillips, votes unanimously to partner with the Unitarian church in Homoródszentpéter, Transylvania.</p> 	<p>Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108 (617) 742-2100 FAX (617) 367-3237 June 12, 1990</p> <p>Dr. Roy D. Phillips Unity Church Unitarian 732 Holly Avenue St. Paul, MN 55104</p> <p>Dear Roy:</p> <p>We appreciate the interest which you and your congregation have expressed in the "Sister Church" program. At the end of this letter you will find the name and address of a Transylvanian congregation which has been designated your "Sister Church." The name of the church's minister is included as well.</p> <p>We hope that this project will be an exciting and rewarding experience for all the members of your congregation. We want you to feel free to be in touch with us if you have any particular problems with which we might help. We may also be able in the months ahead to write you occasionally with news of other UUA congregations' "Sister Church" experiences.</p> <p>...</p> <p>All good luck to you. Let us know of your experiences. If you have specific questions, address them to us c/o Biki Berry, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108. And thank you again for your sincere desire to help. We trust it will reap bountiful rewards for everyone involved.</p> <p>Sincerely yours,</p> <p>UUA Transylvanian Sister Church Committee</p> <p>Dr. Melvin Gulbrandsen The Rev. Doris Hunter Ms. Linda Lu Schulz The Rev. Gyorgy Andrasi (Consultant)</p> <p>YOUR SISTER CHURCH IS:</p> <p>Romanian) Homorodszentpeter; Petreni (congregation-Hungarian; Parohia Unitariana (church) Petreni (city) Judetul Harghita (region) ROMANIA</p> <p>ITS MINISTER IS: The Rev. Imre Balint</p>

A Sister Church Team, later called Partner Church Team (PCT), chaired by Ruth Stryker-Gordon, is formed.

1992	<p>Ruth Stryker-Gordon and PCT raise \$6,500 for the purchase of a tractor. Don Harrington, a retired US Unitarian minister serving a neighboring village with his Hungarian wife Aniko, hand carries the funds, arranges for the purchase, and delivers the tractor to the village.</p> <p>Link to Grand Gazette article from 1992 about Unity donating tractor to partner church in Homoródszentpéter</p> <p>Rev. Áron Barabás becomes the 29th minister at Homoródszentpéter (Church records go back to 1693).</p>
1993	<p>Phyllis Gene Jones, a member of the PCT, becomes the first Unity Church member to visit Homoródszentpéter.</p> 
1995	 <p>Rev. Áron Barabás and his family visit Unity Church, marking the first official visit from Homoródszentpéter leadership.</p> <p>Rev. Kinga-Réka Zsigmond becomes the second resident Homoródszentpéter minister after 1989. She is one of the first women ministers in Transylvania.</p> 
1996	<p>Ruth Stryker-Gordon formally resigns from the PCT and Unity Church due to lack of institutional support for the Sister Church partnership.</p>
1996	<p>Hungary and Romania sign “Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighbourliness.” Hungary renounced all territorial claims to Transylvania, and Romania promised to respect the rights of its minorities.</p> <p>Link to HUNGARY and ROMANIA Treaty of understanding, cooperation and good neighbourliness (with appendix). Signed at Timisoara on 16 September 1996</p>
1998	<p>Rev. Kinga-Réka Zsigmond attends United Theological Seminary in St. Paul, MN.</p> <p>Link to commUNITY Article by Kinga-Réka Zsigmond about Unitarianism in Transylvania, April 5, 1998</p>
1999/ 2000	<p>Rev. Kinga-Réka (Zsigmond) Székely attends Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, CA, as one of the first Transylvanian Balázs scholarship recipients.</p> <p>Kinga-Réka Székely reflecting on her time at Starr King School of Ministry in CA as a Balasz Scholar In 1999/2000 (Video, 7 min.)</p>

2000		<p>Revs. Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs become ministers at Unity. They already were engaged with Project Harvest Hope, a US-Transylvanian agricultural co-op partnership at Okland close to Homoródszentpéter.</p>
2001	<p>Unity Church organizes its first official pilgrimage to Homoródszentpéter, led by Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs. Dr. Judit Gellérd, a Transylvanian leader of the Partner Church movement, serves as the group's tour guide.</p>	
2001	<p>September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.</p>	
2001	<p>Homoródszentpéter sends messages of sympathy to Unity after the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. and they drape their church steeple in black.</p>	
2002		<p>Visit by Domokos and Erzsébet Jobb in St. Paul.</p> <p>Second pilgrimage led by Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs with Unitarians from various congregations.</p>
2003	<p>Third pilgrimage to Homoródszentpéter led by Revs. Janne and Rob Ellers-Isaacs with 14 pilgrims.</p> <p>Unity members organize children's camp.</p>	

2003	<p>Dear Friends,</p> <p>In the envelope we send two pictures of me, Annamária, and my older sister Gyöngyvér.</p> <p>Both of us would like to thank you for the scholarship which you sent us through the Unitarian Church.</p> <p>We will use this money to pay the school fees. I attend the "József Eötvös" agricultural high school in Székelyudvarhely. I am studying environment protection in the 9th grade. I also attend a computer study course at the Modern Business College studying how to manage computers.</p> <p> Annamária</p> <p>Gyöngyvér attends the same college but she is studying economics. Besides this she's a teacher at Homoródszentpéter.</p> <p>Thank you once again the help.</p> <p>Love Annamária and Gyöngyvér</p> <p> Gyöngyvér</p> <p>The PCT at Unity Church continues to raise funds to support various projects in Homoródszentpéter, including the purchase of hymnal covers, scholarships for high school students, and the "women's entrepreneurial fund." Several scholarship recipients later become ministers, schoolteachers, pharmacists, etc.</p>
2004	Hungary joins EU and Romania joins NATO.
2004	<p>Rev. Kinga-Réka and Csaba Székely visit St. Paul.</p> <p>Rev. Kinga-Réka Székely preaches at Unity Church, emphasizing the shared heritage and resilience of the Transylvanian Unitarian community.</p>
2005	<p>The PCT led by Karen Abraham and Sue Conner raises funds for a new parsonage in Homoródszentpéter.</p> <p>11 Unity representatives participate in the dedication of the new parsonage.</p> <p>Pilgrimage to Homoródszentpéter in 2005 (Video 54 min.)</p> <p>Pentecost and Parsonage Dedication 2005 (Video, 20 min.)</p> <p>The PCT publishes a newsletter. Ray Wiedmeyer from Unity conducts interviews with several families in Homoródszentpéter about their life and dreams for the future.</p> <p>Link to 2005-04 Village Newsletter - Interviews with Villagers Spring 2005</p>
2006	<p>Ildiko Máté and Ilonka Máté visit St. Paul.</p> <p>Link to Article in THE-BEE from Dec. 7, 2006 about visit by 2 women from Transylvania visiting dairy farm</p>
2007	Romania joins the EU.

2008	<p>The Transylvanian Unitarian minister Rev. Jakabházi is the first Balázs Scholar visiting St. Paul, starting an annual tradition.</p> <p>Triangle Conference in Homoródszentpéter with representatives of Unity and the Dutch De Woudkapel congregation, another long-time partner of Homoródszentpéter.</p> <p>Link to 2008 Triangle Conference Brochure</p>
2009	 <p>Gyöngyi and Dénes Gergely, Ida and Balázs Maté and Anna Maria Dávid visit St. Paul.</p>
2010	<p>A lay-led trip in May and a pilgrimage led by Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs in July with 12 pilgrims.</p>
2013	<p>Pilgrimage led by Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs with 37 pilgrims (including 13 youth).</p> 
2016	<p>Pilgrimage led by Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs with 15 pilgrims.</p>

<p>2017</p>	<p>Rev. Kinga-Réka and Csaba Székely, their children Csaba, Kinga and Zsolt and Gyöngyike and Zsolt Székely and their son Zsoltika visit St. Paul.</p>	
<p>2018</p>		<p>Pilgrimage led by Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs with 24 pilgrims.</p> <p>Unity group participates in the 450-year anniversary celebration at Szejkefürdő, an important site of the Unitarian community and Székely Hungarian culture.</p>
<p>2019</p>	<p>Last Pilgrimage led by Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs and Karen Hering with 22 pilgrims.</p> <p>Homoródszentpéter gifts a Székely gate to Unity.</p>	
<p>2022</p>	<p>Russia invades Ukraine which has two common borders with Romania.</p>	

2022



Unity raises \$32K to support Ukraine refugee relief efforts together with Homoródszentpéter and the Hungarian Unitarian Church and its charity organization, Gondviselés/Providence.

Unity supports Homoródszentpéter to maintain its pre-school, multiage single classroom elementary school and afterschool program.

2024

Pilgrimage led by Rev. Lara Cowtan and Rene and Christoph Meyer-Grimberg with 20 pilgrims.

Villagers and pilgrims hold a commemoration for Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs.
[Link to Rev. Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs Commemoration in 2024 \(Video, 102 min.\)](#)

Enikő Székely creates a village museum in Homoródszentpéter inspired by dowry trunks.



2025



Rev. Kinga-Réka and Csaba Székely, their children Kende + partner Niki, Csaba, Kinga and Zsolt and Gyöngyike and Zsolt Székely and their son Zsoltika visit St. Paul.

Székely Gate gifted by Homoródszentpéter to Unity is installed next to Unity with support of MN Hungarians.

Link to Gate Dedication [Program](#) and [Video](#).

Between 2001 and 2024 more than 150 Unity Pilgrims have traveled to Transylvania and spent time in Homoródszentpéter as part of 14 large group trips and additional individual visits. About 30 individuals traveled multiple times.

Between 1998 and 2025 23 villagers visited St. Paul in 8 different trips.