

Starting and maintaining a Partner Church relationship between a US and a Transylvanian unitarian congregation is a difficult endeavor. The financial assistance-based interactions will usually provide a one-way road in that relationship. Mutuality in such a relationship would be great, but how can you possibly add a non-financial dimension to the relationship? A non-financial dimension that may widen the appeal of a partnership in your congregation, and may even be reciprocated by the Transylvanian partner?

I served as a translator, and was member of partner Church committees at first Unitarian Church in Bedford, MA, and in Eliot Chapel, Kirkwood, MO. I participated in regional partner church meetings. I gained personal experience just how the Hungarian-English language barrier hinders American Unitarian churches to maintain partner relationships with Transylvanian Unitarian churches.

So, how those two challenges may be met by using information at the Unitarian Torch site?

The non-financial dimension to a relationship is in the development and maintenance of mutual respect. An American partner may signal its respect by

- including Transylvania-focused service(s) in service planning,
- building a service around a translated Transylvanian sermon,
- including Transylvanian stories during the Story for All Ages segment of the service,
- including Transylvanian stories to guide craft activities in RE,
- marking Hungarian Unitarian Church holidays in service announcement,
- using images from Transylvania buildings, art images on your order of service
- performing church music from Transylvania,
- starting a Facebook page for your partnership,
- initiating a conversation with your partner about any current events happening in Transylvania,
- verifying/discussing with them anything you find in translated sermons from this site.

All these are examples of your expression of interest, your willingness to engage, and your explicit acknowledgement of your partner's cultural and liturgical heritage. Now, that you find on this site Transylvanian sermons and children's literature in English, the language barrier should be fading.

Most important of all!!! Don't forget to tell your partner about what you are planning or doing. Send some RE crafts to them, send pictures, post pictures and notes. Ideally, all these should lead to a conversation that strengthen the partnership.

You're welcome to ask me any questions at kokenyesi@unitariantorch.com