

## SKYPE CALL WITH OUR PARTNER UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OCTOBER 22, 2017

St. John's and our Unitarian partner congregation in Nyaradszentlaszlo, Romania, had a Skype call on Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 a.m. in St. John's chapel. The call lasted approximately 45 minutes. Our partners Skyped from the minister's home in the neighboring village of Nyaradgafalva.

Szentlaszlo's interim minister, the Rev. Bela-Botond Jakabhazi, led the call along with four church members, Csaba (lay president), Ilonka (distributor for the bread program), Anna, and Vera (who visited St. John's last year). We mentioned that Rev. Mitra was in Oklahoma for a minister's meeting.

It being the end of October, the subject of Halloween came up. In Romania, Halloween (the eve of All Saints Day or All Souls Day) is primarily a Catholic holiday. Families in Szentlaszlo do carve pumpkins and put lit candles in them for display but don't go door-to-door seeking treats.

Instead of Halloween, the Unitarians celebrate Reformation Day on Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>. It was on this day 500 years ago this year that Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the Wittenberg church castle door. On Nov. 1 there is a small service in the cemetery honoring the dead. Candles and flowers are placed on the graves.

Rev. Bela said that there is some painting being done inside the church. The painter was to repair cracks in the walls and do three coats of white paint but will need to do further work as the work has not been satisfactory. This interior painting is not being done in that area of the church containing the very old frescoes.

The fall harvest is completed. The corn has been picked and the grapes cut for wine. As a result of the parceling of the communal fields after the fall of communism in 1990, almost all village residents own individually a few rows of corn, no more than 1/3 acre each. In these small plots, corn is hand-picked. There is no mechanical picking except in those rare cases where there is a field large enough for machine picking and even then, machines are only brought in for a short time. The corn is put up in corn cribs with the kernels later shelled using small hand or electric driven machines. Most corn is used to feed animals,

chickens, ducks, geese, pigs and cattle. Some is ground and used in making mamaliga, a corn meal dish with cheese and sour cream. Our friends say the overall harvest was "OK" and would have been better if there had been more rain.

Szentlaszlo celebrated the fall harvest in the church on the last Sunday of September. It is one of the times when people, especially the youth, wear their traditional Szekely costumes.

The nearby pensiune now serves daily meals and is offering to deliver meals to homes within a ten-mile radius of Szentlaszlo. This service will greatly benefit the elderly, disabled and others. A two-course delivered meal costs approximately \$2.00 - \$2.50.

Three weeks ago the Unitarian and Reformat (Presbyterian) congregations joined together in our partner church for a presentation on the history of the Hungarian Saint King Laszlo. In addition, an epic poem about Saint Laszlo was read. Rev. Bela will send us this poem.

In other news, next week there will be a Unitarian synod during which about 12 new Unitarian ministers will be ordained. Bela indicates about 1/3 of the graduating class are women. Most new ministers are in their 20s with a couple in their 30s.

The time for the next Skype call will be late November or early December.

The Friends of Szentlaszlo