

***The Kiss Chronicles:
Memories of a
Partner Church Visit***



Rev. Laszlo Kiss, his wife, Matilda,
and daughter, Anna,
visit The First Parish Church in Weston,
October 12-27, 2005

The History of the Partner Church Movement

Partner churches are churches in two countries that have formally agreed to commit to building a relationship for the purpose of celebrating our shared faith community and offering communal support. The UU Partner Church Council was founded in June 1993 to focus and coordinate the enormous grassroots energy of dozens of UU churches which had formed partnerships with Unitarian churches in Central Europe following the collapse of Communism in December 1989. The PCC now supports the partnerships of almost 200 North American UU churches partnered with Unitarians and Universalists in Transylvania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Khasi Hills of India, The Philippines, and Poland. The truly significant activities of the Partner Church program are carried on by hundreds of volunteers at the congregation and district levels.

The Blossoming of a Partnership:

1992 – Larry and Dirk Coburn visited several Unitarian churches in Transylvania, including Torda.

1993 – The Revs. Harry and Judy Hoehler visited Torda, accompanied by Francis and Pam Brooks, Larry and Alixe Coburn, Barbara Coburn, Dirk Coburn, Sally Kahn, and Tom and Peg VanDuyne, all from the First Parish Church of Weston, plus Peter and Vicky Cocculito from the King's Chapel, Boston.

1994 – A year later, the Rev. Ferenc Fazakas, minister of the Torda Unitarian church, and his wife Rose Fazakas visited Weston. Harry Hoehler brought Rev. Fazakas to Lancaster, where he met Tom Wintle.

2000 – Tom Wintle and Larry and Gabriela Coburn visited Torda to help celebrate the re-consecration of the refinished Unitarian church.

2005 – In mid-October, the Rev. Laszlo Kiss, his wife, Matilda, and daughter, Anna, visited First Parish in Weston to meet more of our church family and further strengthen our Partner Church relationship.

Wednesday – October 12, 2005

Larry Coburn picked up the Kiss Family from Logan Airport and transports them to the Shaw home.

Thursday – October 13, 2005

What a delightful family we have in our town – Laszlo, Matilda & Anna!

Mary Shaw brought Laszlo, Matilda & Anna to First Parish this morning, arriving around 10:30 am. They were greeted by Tom Wintle & Sue Spencer, who gave them a tour of the FPCW campus. Laszlo got to try on the pulpit for size. Anna especially liked the paints in the first grade classroom. We also nailed down the Order of Service for Sunday.

Mary then fed them lunch at her home.

Tom & Sue picked Laszlo up at Mary's at 2:30 and took him to the Massachusetts Council of Churches "Liberal-Evangelical Dialog Group" at the Westgate Church in Weston. The topic was the *Role of the Church in Society & Politics*. It was especially interesting to Laszlo, as this type of dialog does not occur in Transylvania. He contributed some comments about their churches since the fall of communism.

Afterwards, Tom dropped Sue off at FPCW and took Laszlo to the parsonage where he met Suzanne Wintle. The three of them went to the Weston Rotary Club meeting, where Laszlo was introduced as a guest from Romania, and where Suzanne was the guest speaker as the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. There is a Rotary Club 30 minutes from Torda, so maybe he'll join.

After Rotary, Suzanne Wintle took Laszlo to FPCW for Senior Choir practice, from which Mary Shaw would bring him home.

Friday – October 14, 2005

I [Sue Spencer] picked up Laszlo, Mathilda, and Anna at the Shaw House at about 9:15 am. After stopping at Larry Coburn's to pick up a camera, we headed into Boston to the Museum of Science. On the way, the Kiss family got a taste of Boston traffic at its worst! Traffic was crawling on the MassPike through Newton, and then Storrow Drive was clogged. Wishing I'd taken the MassPike all the way to the end instead of choosing Storrow for the scenic view, got off the latter and made my way through city streets - thus providing an unplanned, inadvertent windshield tour of downtown Boston in the rain! More than once, I feared we were all going to end up like Charlie on the MTA, driving forever ON the streets of Boston - but I didn't let on to my guests.

We arrived at the Science Museum shortly before 11, taking advantage of discount passes provided by the Weston Public Library. A young woman at the ticket office gave us a map with suggestions of what would be most enjoyable for Anna. The MOS is definitely the place to go for with energetic children - with some 600 exhibits, there's no need to stay at one activity for more than a few seconds! We spent most of our time in the Blue Wing, doing hands-on experiments, getting a close-up view of T. Rex and other dinosaurs, watching baby chicks hatch, and seeing some beautiful small monkeys from South America. Anna especially seemed to enjoy the natural history/biology exhibits, and spent a great deal of time with an interactive program that lets you hear the calls of different shore birds. Alas, the musical staircase that Katie Shaw had recommended to Anna wasn't working! On the other hand, we got some lovely views of the city and the Charles River Basin from various vantage points.

We had lunch in the museum cafeteria, jumping at the chance to get American junk food. Anna impressed her parents by eating an entire hot dog and quite a bit of fruit salad. We all enjoyed the terrific French fries.

We left the museum a little after 1 pm and made our way out to Tracy Carlson's house, arriving around 2. Tracy's gracious welcome dispelled the rain - which had been constant all day.

– Sue Spencer

* * * * *

Indeed, Laszlo, Matilda and Anna are delightful people – I greatly enjoyed spending the afternoon with them!

Sue Spencer dropped them off at my house in Newton around 2 pm. It was cold and raining hard, so most of my plans (Harvard Square, Walden Pond) went out the window.

We chatted for a while before deciding what to do/where to go. They're so friendly and energetic, and their English is excellent. We talked about various things, including their visit so far. Laszlo told me about the liberal-evangelical discussion group from yesterday, which he found greatly interesting, even though a lot of it pertained to local matters.

He talked about how the church is one of the few moral forces in his country and how corruption has emerged in the new post-Communist politics; how politicians make great promises--until they get elected and, having tasted the power they were seeking, don't fulfill the promises they made. He spoke about villages, where there are two important and influential people: the political leader (presumably a mayor or equivalent) and the minister. People ask the minister about political questions, and it can be awkward.

After coffee and hot chocolate we decided to go to a kid-friendly movie, so we headed out to the new *Wallace and Grommit* movie, which they all seemed to enjoy. On the drive back, we talked about how Laszlo and Matilda met, and about how he decided to go into the ministry. I asked if there were female Unitarian ministers in Transylvania, and there are! I learned about how

Laszlo's brother came to move to America (he won a lottery for a green card) and about his early frustrating weeks with American bureaucracy. Laszlo helped keep his spirits up by daily chats via Yahoo Instant Messenger – a shrinking world, indeed! We also talked about Matilda's family: her parents are busy harvesting (corn), and her brother is completing his studies in topology. In order to earn some money he worked at Pizza Hut in Romania not long ago.

I dropped them off at Mary Shaw's just as she was arriving back; she was going to take them to the pizza party.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time with Kisses and am very glad I had the chance to get to know them for a few hours. They are lovely, gracious and delightful people, and I am very happy that they could come. I hope that as many First Parish members get to meet them as possible.

– Tracy Carlson

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Friday night [Oct. 14, 2005], the Church School Committee hosted a pizza party/game night in honor of the Kiss family. Realistically we expected the church school committee members and their families to make up the party. However, it turned out that over 70 people participated to welcome our special guests! What a fun evening we had! The children participated in Twister, Battleship, Sorry, Zingo and other games. There was a crafts table where the children decorated pumpkins and Halloween visors. We all feasted on pizza, salads and dessert and enjoyed spending some social time together.

The Kiss family arrived with wide smiles. What lovely people! I had the good fortune to spend a bit of time chatting with Rev. Kiss. He asked many questions about our Sunday School program and seemed amazed that all of our children knew each other so well and played so well together. I reminded him that they attend Sunday

School together as well as the Weston schools. I also mentioned that some of them play sports together. He chuckled and said that if he preached in America, he would bring in a winning soccer team - or football, as he calls it! He explained that in Torda at his parish, the facility is not large enough for a Sunday school. Instead, he visits the public school and teaches religious education right at school where multiple-aged children are grouped together. His long-term endeavor is to eventually expand the church to accommodate a Sunday School. The First Parish children are certainly in for a treat when he preaches in Chapel! He truly was taken back by the number of kids that were playing right in front of him. In Torda, most families have one child. He encourages couples to have more children, but they would rather provide more for one child rather than not have enough for more children. It is very difficult to have more children when many parents need to travel great distances for months at a time to find work. We talked about the flooding problems they have experienced. Naturally, the conversation turned to his family. He told me about Anna's painted rock collection. She was able to paint a pumpkin at the party, but before she leaves Weston, we'll be sure she paints a rock to take back and add to her collection. Rev. Kiss spoke about his youngest child, in the capable hands of his parents at home. It was very difficult for him and his wife to leave behind their son on this trip as he has bronchitis and had become ill again, right before the trip. We shared a moment of just being parents discussing his son's condition. Later in the evening, we presented Anna with a gift to take home. It was such a pleasure to have had the opportunity to spend some time with the Kiss family.

– Kelly Larocque

Saturday – October 15, 2005

It may have been the Kisses third full day in Weston, but it felt like the fortieth day of rain! Actually only a week, but it felt like time to start building the Ark.

Mary Shaw dropped Laszlo off at church at 10:00 am. Tom Wintle was just finishing the trustees meeting of the Council of Christian Congregations Within the UUA, and all of them came (as planned) to Laszlo's "Conversation on Transylvanian Unitarian Theology." Seventeen folks from Weston and elsewhere gathered in the parlor for a 15-minute presentation by Laszlo followed by 45 minutes of discussion.

Laszlo noted that the Unitarian church in Transylvania has "no doctrines, only principles" that shape their collective consciousness. These include the love of God and love of neighbor, that God is wise and good, that the Holy Spirit is God's power and Jesus is our human guide. During the Q&A, he noted that Easter is somewhat difficult for them as they believe in a spiritual resurrection, not a bodily resurrection of Jesus. Good Friday is important to them because Jesus made a sacrifice for the sake of his commitment to the kingdom. Laszlo used the interesting phrase of believing in "the life, teachings and death" of Jesus. Communion is very important as a way of feeling "close to Jesus." Baptism is in the name of the one God, accepts one into the church, and commits one to follow the teachings of Jesus.

Tom Wintle then spirited Laszlo away so both could attend a committal service in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, Massachusetts (for Robert Cassidy). On the way, Tom pointed out Walden Pond and the reproduction of Thoreau's cabin. The rains still falling, Laszlo held an umbrella for Tom during the service. Laszlo was interested that Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Louisa May Alcott were all buried on Author's Ridge in Sleepy Hollow.

We then decamped to Concord's famous Colonial Inn, where we were joined by Barbara & Paul Penfield, who brought with them Matilda and Anna Kiss. The lunch was judged to be better than what Paul and Tom had expected!

This was followed by an adventure of miscommunication.

Tom & Laszlo headed off to the Concord Unitarian Church while Penfields and distaff Kisses stood on the Colonial Inn porch. Tom & Laszlo waited awhile on the church porch but no one arrived, so they went back to the Inn while the Penfields/Kisses went to the now locked-up church. Matters got worse when Tom decided, "well, we'll just go to the visitors center as planned" and they went to the Old North Bridge visitors center. No familiar folks appeared. "Is there another 'visitor center,'" asked Tom. "Yes, in Lexington." So Tom & Laszlo enjoyed a leisurely drive down "Battle Road" to the Minuteman visitor center in Lexington where Kisses were all reunited during a film about the battles of Concord and Lexington.

Practical matters followed – Laszlo wanted new running shoes so we went to DSW Shoe Warehouse in Natick/Framingham. A good time was had by all.

Day Three ended with a wonderful dinner at the parsonage, with a grand herbed chicken dinner prepared by Suzanne Wintle. Tom was falling asleep as he drove the Kisses back to the Shaw's home.

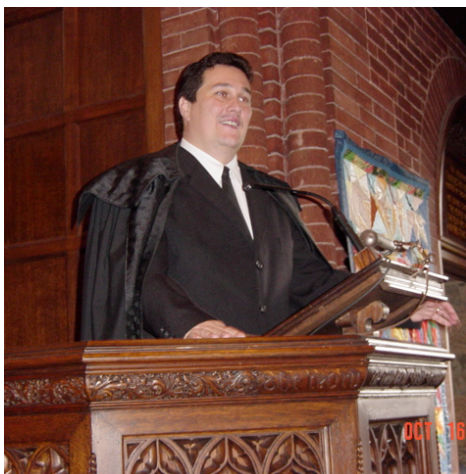
Just a grand (and full) day.

– Tom Wintle

Sunday – October 16, 2005

Ever-faithful Mary Shaw brought Laszlo to church at 8:45 am (she had a singing engagement elsewhere), where he was met by Tom Wintle. They reviewed the order of service, the chancel set-up, how to use microphones, and so on.

The service began with the processional hymn "Lord of all being," sung to the tune "Transylvania." After the Call to Worship and opening prayers, Tom introduced Laszlo who spoke to the church school students – noting he was nervous and saying that his robe/cape was not supposed to make him look like Dracula! He told the students about his country and church. The Youth Choir did a



*Rev. Kiss in the pulpit of the
First Parish in Weston's
Sanctuary*

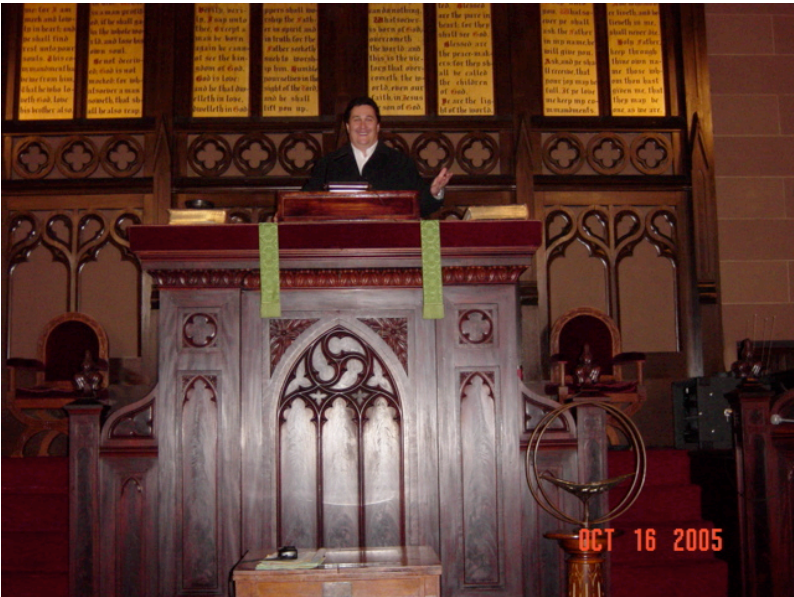
beautiful anthem "Morning has broken." After scripture (I Corinthians 13, Psalm 119:33-40), the children left during the singing of "Let there be peace on earth." The gospel (Matthew 22:34-40) was read, an anthem "Szekely Aldas" was sung by the Senior Choir in Hungarian and in English, then Laszlo preached his sermon about Torda (800 parishioners, building constructed c. 1791) and about love as the

essence of the Christian gospel. Tom's pastoral prayer asked for God's blessing on the Torda congregation and that the Kiss family would know the blessings of pilgrimage. After (many) announcements and offertory, many cried during the closing hymn "This is my song" to the tune "Finlandia," with such lines as "This is my home, the country where my heart is; here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine; but other hearts in other lands are beating with hope and dreams as true and high as mine . . . My country's skies are bluer than the ocean . . . but other lands have . . . skies . . . as blue as mine."

After church many people thanked Laszlo for his visit and shared stories and comments. The Kiss family then joined some 30 parishioners in a bus ride for our "Pilgrimage to Salem," where music director Bill Sano amazed all with his stories about the architecture and history of the City of Salem.

We returned to Weston around 6:30 pm. All were, I suspect, thoroughly exhausted. A good but long day.

– Tom Wintle



The Salem Witch Museum





Monday – October 17, 2005

Expecting a raw, cold, wet day in the re-created village of our forefathers at Plimoth Plantation, the Lord chose otherwise and broke forth the sunshine for our Romanian friends to experience time of past, as well as time of present!

Grey Lee, eldest of the four Lee brothers, joined us as driver and soon became our leader! Having spent a few months in Transylvania/Romania years ago, he and Laszlo were soon sharing stories of common interests, mountain trails, and experiences, and refreshing each other's vocabulary!

We had arranged to meet with the Reverend Sarah Clark, of the Plymouth UU, the oldest continuous church in New England, and there at this prominent position on the hill in town, she led us for a spirited tour of this lovely stone church with warm wood interior. The stained glass windows depicted scenes of the Pilgrims and major events of their arrival. Reverend Kiss took the pulpit long enough to feel the "call," (and for a photo!), and we learned much of what this UU church offers to their community and to others who take the time to appreciate our rich history.

We took a self-guided tour of the Plymouth Rock and of the Mayflower, where staff shared intriguing anecdotes and history briefs of the voyage of "these approximate 103 passengers and 10 - 12 crew" while on their ocean-going pilgrimage.

After walking around the village and the harbor front, it was time for sustenance . . . I had researched options so we narrowed it down to a few choices, all on the waterfront. The choice came down to the Lobster Hut vs. Woods', the decision made on table availability! Anna's desire for chicken tenders also factored into this "critical" decision! As Grey said, "all deep fried haddock is the same," as he sat there with his lobster bisque! Anna shared one of her tenders, and kept one for a later snack

on the return trip home to Weston! The three wise ones chose fish and it sure tasted to us as fresh caught!

Having been forewarned from an earlier call to Plimoth Plantation, we arrived after the 950 school children had left for the day! We had the place practically to ourselves, taking in the preview film, then heading down the path to the village. Several re-enactors were on site, portraying village life of 400+ years ago, some preparing bread, a few mending rail fences with the help of a few visiting schoolboys, and one with his musket, perhaps on the ready for some wild turkeys! Anna followed the many chickens and took time with her stick to mark her "a" on the many dirt paths.! Matilda, Laszlo, and Grey stopped at nearly all the backyard vegetable, herb, and flower gardens to share the names and uses of the many varieties. All are quite into gardening and this became a major focus of our time in the village! A pathway by the backwaters led us to the Wampanoag site, where descendants were preparing a meal and sharing history with ready and willing visitors. The four structures were open to view, offering a glimpse into the past of this native people and their lifestyle.

We hiked up the 46 steps back to the Visitor Center, spent a brief time in the well-stocked gift shop, finding a few representative items, including a small "1620" rock that fit just right in the palm of Anna's hand. Up the hill we went to the Crafts Center where a potter and carpenter were displaying their trades. Laszlo shared much with us of his family and their rich history of traditional family gatherings and family trades, including his father's capabilities with woodworking and cabinetry.

It was truly a blessed day with our friends, and even had the sun not shone for us, I'm willing to bet that we would have had the same, meaningful and joyful day of adventure.

Best regards,
Marcy Lee

Tuesday – October 18, 2005

Today we did a whirlwind tour of some Boston and Cambridge landmarks. On Tuesday morning Tom and the Kiss family met up with Sue at the First Parish in Cambridge, just off Harvard Square. After being shown First Parish's sanctuary, we crossed the street to the Yard, and took quick looks at Memorial Church and Widener Library. From there we got in Tom's car and drove to Dorchester to see the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum. We had time to see their introductory video, view a few of the exhibits, and have lunch, before heading for Roxbury (with the help of Tom's navigation system) to see First Church Roxbury and the UU Urban Ministry center. From Roxbury we drove into Boston for an all-too-brief tour of Arlington Street Church.

Tom then dropped Sue and the Kisses at the Boston Duck Tours near the Prudential Center. Nice weather prevailed and we had a delightful amphibious tour that included parts of Back Bay, Beacon Hill, the North End, Charlestown, and the Charles River basin. We were quite hungry by the time the Duck Tour deposited us back at the Pru around 5, and decided that this was the perfect time to introduce the Kiss family to Legal Seafood. Our bellies full, we choose to walk down Boylston Street to the Arlington Street subway station. Whom should we meet in the underground but Larry and Gabriella Coburn, on their way to a Back Bay event?

The Green Line and the Red Line took us back to Harvard Square. We walked the few blocks to Sue's car, which was parked at Episcopal Divinity School (the last landmark of the day), and drove back to Weston, tired but happy.

– Sue Spencer



*The Kiss Family goes on a Duck Tour of
Boston with Rev. Spencer*

It meant a great deal to Ken Fish of the Denominational Affairs Committee, who had been looking forward to meeting Laszlo in a more gracious setting, that Tom [Wintle] kindly took Laszlo up to the Lahey Clinic in Burlington for a little visit where Ken was a patient.

– Imogene Fish

Wednesday – October 19, 2005

Larry and Gabriella Coburn hosted Standing Committee members for dessert and coffee with the Kiss family.

Thursday – October 20, 2005

No day host; dinner at Chris Nelson's home.

Friday – October 21, 2005

On Friday, October 21st, I met the Kiss family at the First Church, UU, Leominster, where Tony [Lorenzen – ministerial intern at First Parish in Weston] had brought them from Weston. We toured the church and then headed to Panera for lunch. Anna was very excited to have “real” bread. She was a little wary at first about me, as I could understand what she was saying to her mom. After lunch, we headed up to the apple orchard at Sholan Farms. We picked a variety of apples and the Kisses told us about their land and trees in Transylvania. We split up so that I could meet my kids off the school bus but we hooked back up with Tony, the Kisses, and Tony's wife, Tina, and son, Zack, at the Davis Farmland Megamaze. We had hoped to match our wits against this year's layout but, unfortunately, they had limited their operating hours to the weekend, so we opted for a great playground where the kids let out a lot of energy by running and climbing. Anna and my daughter had fun racing on the track. From there we journeyed to my house and met up with my husband. We brought out the traditional Hungarian palinka to drink a toast to our guests and then had a very companionable dinner with fun conversation. We enjoyed meeting the Kiss family and spending time with them. Thank you for that opportunity.

Sincerely,
Linnea Romhanyi

Saturday – October 22, 2005

I spent a half-day with the Kisses at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. We had a great time covering about three different areas of the museum. After we entered, I walked them to the Huntington entrance so I could show them how the museum was approached for so many years. We went up the stairs and they were very impressed with the Sargent murals and the size of the large hall. We spent a little time in the medieval galleries viewing religious paintings on our way to the Impressionist gallery that they wanted to see. Anna was a remarkable young girl who was interested and patient with the adults . . . a seasoned traveler! Then we had a break for lunch in the cafeteria.

After lunch, we spent the time viewing the Ansel Adams exhibit. The Kisses had been to his center when they were living in California six years ago so they were interested in seeing some of their favorites that they had remembered. We arrived back at the Shaws' shortly before three o'clock in the afternoon and I left them to pack to go to Larry Coburn's for their remaining time in Weston.

– Barbara Coburn

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After a brief conversation that Barbara Penfield had with Laszlo, Larry Coburn, and Dirk Coburn, Barbara mentioned to Paul that Laszlo hoped to develop a Web site for his Torda church and that Dirk had said he should speak with Paul. Paul spent part of Friday night learning about how the Web works for Eastern European languages. On Saturday, Paul left a message with Larry C. for Laszlo to call when he and his family had completed their move from one home [Larry and Mary Shaw's] to another [Larry and Gabriella Coburn's]. In the meantime, Paul had arranged with Lelia Elliston to be part of the meeting, since she and Paul share responsibility for the First Parish Church Web site.

Laszlo called at about 4:00 – Paul picked him up at the Coburns' and they both trooped to Lelia's home. Since Courtney was working, Lelia was also managing their two children and two Weimaraner dogs.

During the next two hours, Laszlo decided on the Web domain name he wanted (www.unitariustorda.org) and bought the domain. It was installed on the same server that handles the First Parish Web site (One World Hosting, in Worthington, Ohio), and a temporary home page uploaded. His site was up and running. Now Laszlo has to do the hard part, writing the content for the site.

At 6:15, Barbara arrived with food from Campo di Fiori for everyone. As we all wolfed down the sandwiches, Larry arrived with Mathilda.

At close to 6:30, the Penfields and Kisses were off to Jordan Hall to hear Boston Baroque perform a delightful, semi-staged production of Georg Friedrich Handel's opera *Agrippina*. The opera is all about love, power and intrigue, wonderfully sung (in Italian with English supertitles) and acted by its cast of nine. Laszlo was able to understand some of the Italian. He speaks Hungarian, Romanian, and English fluently, knows Italian from hearing it on TV and radio, and has studied French. The role of a young Nero was sung by a countertenor, the first that Laszlo had ever heard. It was a long day for Mathilda and Laszlo, especially considering what all was planned for Sunday.

– Barbara Penfield

Sunday – October 23, 2005

Day host was Jessica Pohl. Laszlo spoke to Children's Chapel and led a forum in the Parlor after worship. He also participated in the CROP Walk with Tom Wintle.



*Marcia Matthyse presents a prayer shawl to
Matilda Kiss from the First Parish Prayer Shawl
Ministry*

Monday – October 24, 2005

Midmorning on a beautiful fall day, I picked up the three Kisses at Larry and Gabriella Coburn's on Ash Street for a shopping expedition. We stopped in at Land's Sake so Anna could pick out a Halloween pumpkin from the large pile in front of the farmstand.

Mathilda and Anna poured over the advertising circulars from the *Boston Globe*, showing items in stores we could consider going to. Following an errand at MGH in Waltham, we crossed the street to Costco. I showed my membership card and we then fanned out to check out all the things in this warehouse building. Make-believe Christmas trees and other decorations took up an aisle at the back of the store – this in October! Laszlo found several pairs of chino pants to his liking and after a rather long wait in line, he carried the unbagged items out to the car in the large parking lot. We then headed

out Route 9 to Pizzeria Uno where we were a little late meeting [my son] Duncan for lunch. Anna was pleased with the crayons and coloring book given her by the waitress. All lunch orders were different but five people shared two scrumptious cookie-ice cream-whipped cream- and chocolate sauce desserts. After lunch, Duncan left for home and the Kisses and I left for Wal-Mart, where we spent quite awhile exploring the store. The Kisses found Scooby-Doo items they knew would be popular with their son back in Torda and Anna was given Barbie dolls to show her parents' appreciation for her being such a lovely, cooperative girl on the trip. Anna was ecstatic with her new purchases and gave hugs to her parents declaring them the very best parents in the world! Assorted items to take back home filled the shopping cart. After checkout, we headed back to Weston arriving at four o'clock – a busy shopping experience before an upcoming busy evening for the Kisses and a pleasing time for Duncan and me to better know this charming and loving family.

– Barbara Elmes

Tuesday – October 25, 2005

Day hosts were Larry and Gabriella Coburn. No report received. [Dirk Coburn was scheduled to take the Kisses to Harvard Square during the day, followed by dinner at the Harvard Club, with Larry and Gabriella, where Carl Scovel was speaking.]

Wednesday – October 26, 2005

On Laszlo's last full day in Weston, Tom Wintle picked him up at Coburn's at 10:30 am and drove to Boston for Laszlo's preaching engagement at King's Chapel for their Wednesday Midweek Service. On a chilly walk up Beacon Hill from the Boston Common garage, we got to see a protest demonstration in front of the State House (nurses asking better wages) and took a brief tour of the Boston Athenaeum, including a visit to the basement to find an obscure book by Louie Cornish on religious minorities in Transylvania written c. 1927, complete with complaints to the Romanian government.

Earl Holt led the service at King's Chapel and wore his very own Transylvanian minister's cape. Laszlo used the same sermon he gave in Weston, but Tom still laughed at Laszlo's line about being a "tough Transylvanian" who broke down and cried when Starr King supported them during Anna's illness. Among the 24 people present were Peter & Vicki Coccoluto, who are planning another visit to Transylvania this coming September of 2006. Laszlo joined some parishioners for lunch and discussion in the Vestry.

Tentative plans to meet up with Matilda and Anna (guided by Mariah McGrath) at the New England Aquarium were cancelled when the ladies called to say they'd finished the Aquarium and were heading to lunch at Legal Seafood. Laszlo and Tom took advantage of the free time to tour the State House (seeing the House and Senate chambers and great halls and bookstore) and to visit the King's Chapel House "little chapel" at 64 Beacon Street. We then took Laszlo's picture by the *Make Way for Ducklings* statues to illustrate the book given to Anna by the Church School.

At the Coburn's house, Laszlo and Tom said their farewells, both thinking the visit had been very successful and promising to continue the partnership into the future.

Epilogue

Tragically, Laszlo Kiss died unexpectedly of a heart attack on February 28, 2006. He was thirty-two years old. He is survived by his widow, Matilda, his daughter, Anna, now seven years old, young son, Lacika, and his parents.

Funeral services were held at The Unitarian Church in Torda on March 2nd and in the church in his hometown, Dicsoszentmarton, on March 3rd. Larry and Gabriella Coburn were able to attend the services, both of which were filled to overflowing with family, friends and others wishing to pay respects. Laszlo then was buried on a hill overlooking the town in which he grew up.

After the service in Dicsoszentmarton, Matilda told Larry Coburn that Laszlo had been tremendously excited about the partnership with First Parish in Weston. On Sunday, February 26, they held a tea at the Torda Parsonage, where Laszlo made a Powerpoint presentation about the family's October 2005 visit to Weston.

The First Parish Church in Weston is organizing a Laszlo Kiss Fund in his memory.



Pewter bowl presented to Laszlo Kiss commemorating his visit to The First Parish Church in Weston, Partner Church with the Unitarian Church of Torda, Romania

*Compiled and edited by Betsy M. Gibson, Parish Administrator
of The First Parish Church in Weston
February 2006*



The Unitarian
Church in Torda
Transylvania,
Romania

Partner Churches



The First Parish Church
in Weston
Weston, Massachusetts
USA