

## UNITARIAN ACADEMY ANNUAL REPORT 2019

### CONTENT

#### 1. EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES PERFORMED AND SETTING SHORT-TERM GOALS

1.1. Unitarian Academy during its three years of existence

1.2. Outlook for the coming years

#### 2. SUMMARIES

2.1. Organization, personnel, economy

2.2. Training, publications, presentations

#### 3. CONCLUSION – EVALUATION OF THE FIRST THREE-YEARS CYCLE

### 1. ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITARIAN ACADEMY

#### 1.1.

##### UNITARIAN ACADEMY DURING ITS THREE YEARS OF EXISTENCE

“I know several people who give a lot of light. It is because they did absorb a lot of light themselves. They do really shine.” Author of these words is the American Unitarian and writer Robert Fulghum. At our last encounter, when we came to the topic, what kind of activities do we, Czech Unitarians, do, I could not miss out our Unitarian Academy. Fulghum paused in thought and then he said: “If possible, I would like to help you. In this phase of my life, I feel a vehement need to help others.”

Now, when the Unitarian Academy is reviewing its first three years of existence, Fulghum’s words may be a mirror, inspiration, and encouragement. A mirror – because in evaluating we must naturally consider the goal and meaning of our activities: did our expectations prove to be true, did our hopes become fulfilled? An inspiration – because the main motive must be an altruistic help to the world. An encouragement – for anything that needs to live and grow, must undergo constant change.

When the Unitarian Academy was at its very beginnings, at our first module that took place in Český Krumlov, one participant came to me and said: “I had no inkling, that Unitarianism has such an old and rich tradition. And how much light is in it!” At times, I recollect these words... and now, thinking about the three years of Unitarian Academy activities, just rose in my mind.

Český Krumlov, Kuks, Broumov, Telč, Litomyšl, Nečtiny – at all these places we already met. Always a marathon of lectures, presentations, workshops and sharing; evenings in friendly discussions, cooking and eating together; not to mention private dialogues – there was always enough space for that all. Sometimes it was even exhausting. Yes, it is exhausting, we can see it on ourselves, when we meet each other in the corridor, each of us feeling influences of the huge amount of information and knowledge. But at the end of the day when evening is coming, we become relaxed, talking happily. All the impressions are harmonizing, fragments coming together – and at the departure, we somehow don’t want to leave. Almost every participant of our gatherings knows these feelings!

It is about that Fulghumian light, for light is a beautiful symbol of knowledge. After all, in Broumov we started to play spontaneously with candles arranged in dark corridor. It followed in shooting a videoclip with the name “Light, come in my mind” (*Světlo, vejdi v mysl mou*). And how much inspiration and understanding for the context of many various spheres of our Unitarian tradition we gained from our gatherings – it is not able to express it in terms of quantity or numbers. We can quantify only how many people were involved in the Unitarian Academy during the three years – about one hundred. Each module is guaranteed with a group of teachers, consisting of our own members, as well of teachers coming from abroad, for in some fields we need true experts. This is also the case of the newly introduced colloquia, organized by the Unitarian Academy in cooperation with our minister board; external guests are invited to our colloquia for specialized discussions.

Colloquium may not be a familiar term for everyone. In our concept, it is a kind of informal, but hosted discussion meeting, focused on a specific topic, in which Unitarianism intersects with society-wide themes and interests. That is why colloquia take place in the presence of the NSČU ministers (of course, depending on their current time limits) and other guests, who can in some way present or complete the chosen topic.

Similarly specific are our summer training camps, focused specifically on our Unitarian spiritual practice. In comparison to the classic modules, here we have only few lectures and theoretic parts. The more time and space we have for sharing, collective activities, meditation, prayer etc. That all comes from our historic roots – to surprise of many participants, including our long-standing members. It is surprising how rich is our own Unitarian tradition in the field of spiritual practice. Due to some historical events in past decades, some people associate our spiritual practice with lectures and trifling chatting on spiritual themes. But where is a specific practice, supporting personal spiritual life? – Yes, Unitarianism is rich in this!

In connection with numbers, it is worth to mention a specific curiosity of the Unitarian Academy – its budget. In comparison to other Unitarian educational institutions, it is very modest and sometime parts are med in a “DIY” way. Of course, much better financial situation of other Unitarian educational institutions is determined by their local conditions, number of community members, the conditions of its birth, funds rooting in the past and by other conditions; for aspects of this kind determine every educational institution. For instance, to compare the Unitarian Academy with the British Unitarian College, they are similar in the focus and way of organization, but they significantly differ in their budgets (both in the expense for one student and in the total budget). In many cases we use volunteering (as we do in our communities), for there is no other way – as we all know from everyday life of our organizations.

Despite practical challenges and limits, we are proud to be one of the active and functional Unitarian educational institutions. There are not many of them, globally. These are the Unitarian College in the Great Britain mentioned above, Starr King in California (where Karel Hašpl and Bohdana Čapková-Hašplová studied during their sojourn in the US), Meadville Lombard in Chicago (Miloš Mikota studied there) and the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca. We are grateful to be in contact with all these institutions, discovering possible ways of cooperation, student- and teacher-exchange, sharing of study materials etc.

This all brings us back to the beautiful symbol of light. All the activities of the Unitarian Academy are aimed to stimulate the human life-path to knowledge, wisdom, compassion, respect, and love. The main assumption is, that those of our members who take part in some of our modules, do benefit not only to themselves and to the other participants, but also to their communities.

It was the enthusiasm and ardor, what gave birth to the Unitarian Academy: it arose as an impulse, coming from the need and desire to spread light. Now, the Unitarian Academy wants to be beneficial for you, dear friends and pilgrims on the Unitarian spiritual path, members of all our communities.

It is our common interest to spread light. Let’s support our Unitarian Academy, organization sparing no effort for this task. Robert Fulghum has not visited us yet and considering his full diary during all his visits of the Czech Republic, we cannot hope to see him soon. But the message of his word is clear: let’s soak up a lot of light – to be able shine for others. This is one of the ways, how we can help to our world.

## **1.2**

### **PROSPECT IN NEXT YEARS**

Study at the Unitarian Academy is intended and organized to be a continuous process, having no official beginning or end. It means, that students do not need to wait for any start, like an introducing module, etc. – The study can begin anytime. However, completing of the first cycle is an opportunity to look back and think about future.

Anyhow, we must highlight that the Unitarian Academy is in continuous development and when comparing how it works now and how it was functioning in its very beginnings, we can see some distinct phases. Three years ago, no-one was even thinking about organizing any facultative module focused on spiritual practice! Working on the preparations of the first retreat, none of us did dream about cooperation with international education institutions like Meadville Lombard Theological School, Starr King School for the Ministry, János Zsigmond Unitárius Kollégium in Kolossvár, or Unitarian College.

How we would like the Unitarian Academy to look like in, let's say, twenty years? With a rational and sober view, it is not difficult to imagine. So, let's give freedom to our imagination! – We wish the Unitarian academy to be beneficial not only for our members, helping them to more profound understanding of our Unitarian tradition(s) and way of organization; in its activities, should have an overlap into broad public. It should support job opportunities for students, having some form of accreditation and being an official educative institution. It needs to be safe in its existence as a sole subject, with secured financial sources. To serve other European Unitarian communities and be in connection with them. And we could continue... but...

But now we must mention, that for accomplishment all these wishes, and even to realize some more, that we all can hope for and dream, it is necessary for the Unitarian Academy to have correspondingly qualified and competent leaders – with emphasis on professionalism of the leading team.

Of course, it is hard to say anything about future. Twenty years makes plenty of time – and we have just finished the first cycle of our modules. The future will depend on all those, who will come in touch with the Unitarian Academy, on those who will participate and help to lead it. No-one – in the very beginnings, nor now – would like the UA to be autotelic or self-centered. The mission of the Unitarian Academy is to serve people, to serve the Unitarian tradition, which is a free-minded and independent approach to the transcendence, that endows our lives with sense and improves our human existence on our life path and our striving for spiritual realization.

## **2. SUMMARIES**

### **2.1. ORGANIZATION, PERSONNEL, ECONOMY**

#### **UNITARIAN ACADEMY MANAGEMENT:**

In the year 2019, the board of the Unitarian Academy consisted of following persons:

#### ***Director:***

- prof. Ing. arch. Michal Kohout, elected for the period 2017-2019 in a tender

#### ***Unitarian Academy Working Committee:***

- prof. Ing. arch. Michal Kohout
- Rev. Petr Samojský, D.Min.
- PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová

#### ***Unitarian Academy Commission (study guarantors):***

- PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
- Rev. Mgr. Vlastimil Krejčí
- Rev. Petr Samojský, D.Min.
- PhDr. Jana Tichá, Ph.D.

- Mgr. Jiří Motl, Ph. D.
- Mgr. Filip Jaroš, Ph. D.

## STUDENTS

On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, there are 27 enrolled, 20 in active study.

## ECONOMY

In 2019, total revenues of the Unitarian Academy were 575,896 CZK.

In 2019, total expenditures of the Unitarian Academy were 508,337 CZK.

On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, the funds available to the Unitarian Academy amount to 67,559 CZK.

UA budget 2019 and payments	Proposed	Payed
<b>Expenses</b>		
Accommodation - Retreats	140,000	142,671
Accommodation – Practical exercises	30,000	35,910
Accommodation - Retreats	80,000	96,320
Translations	40,000	53,369
Refreshments	10,000	8,808
Contract of work - Guarantees	25,000	19,500
Travel costs - domestic	20,000	1,366
Travel costs – Foreign lecturers	130,000	109,710
Fees – Czech lecturers, obligate modules	10,000	1,376
Fees – Czech lecturers, practical spiritual exercises	15,000	4,400
Fees – Czech lecturers, colloquia	0	5,618
Publications	50,000	17,029
Promotion abroad: printed materials, travel costs...	40,000	8,596
Minor equipment	0	3,664
<b>Total</b>	<b>590,000</b>	<b>508,337</b>
<b>Incomes</b>		
From previous years	90,000	90,000
Subscriptions from the NSČU budget	350,000	350,000
External dotations and grants	50,000	5,172
Donations, voluntary contributions	100,000	93,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>590,000</b>	<b>575,896</b>
<b>Rest for the next year</b>		<b>67,559</b>

## SUPPORTERS

In 2019, the Unitarian Academy was financially supported by:

- The Religious Society of Czech Unitarians – 350,000 CZK.
- Czech Unitarian “Community of Wide Fellowship” (*Obec širšího společenství*) – 30,000 CZK.
- Prague Unitarian Community – 30,000 CZK.

- The International Unitarian Church in Prague – 24,000 CZK.
- Private donors – total amount 9,800 CZK.

We thank all our supporters for their contributions to our activities!

We thank all abroad lecturers, who were willing to give their lectures for free, and to those, who did not even charge their travel costs. We thank to all our guarantors and members of our board, who work for the Unitarian Academy voluntary, and to those, who renounced any payments of their travel costs. Thanks to their support, the Unitarian Academy saved in the year 2019 approximately 80,000 CZK, that will be used for improvement of our activities.

*Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová*

## **2.2. TRAINING, PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS**

### **MODULES STUDIED IN 2019**

1) Module P5: Public service.  
Started at the retreat in Litomyšl, March 29-31, 2019.

#### ***Teachers:***

Rev. Jill Mc Allister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis, US  
 Rev. Tera Klein, Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasadena, Starr King School for the Ministry, US  
 Rev. Dr. Botond Koppandi, Kolozsvári Protestáns Teológiai Intézet, Cluj, Romania.  
 Rev. Petr Samojský, Pražská obec unitářů, Obec širšího společenství, Board of the Unitarian Academy, Prague, Czech Republic.  
 Rev. Mark Shiels, The International Unitarian Church of Prague, European Unitarians Universalists, London, UK.  
 PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, NSČU, Czech Republic.  
 Mikuláš Vymětal, minister of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Czech Republic.

#### ***Lectures:***

*Multiculturalism and the language of respect – fundamental attributes of the Unitarian community.*

- Respect as a fundamental characteristic of the Unitarian community in its theoretical and practical dimensions; how to use it as a unique characteristic towards the public.
- Unitarian community as a multicultural community – in history and today; practical applications.
- “The Divinity in us”, or the Language of Reverence and its possibilities. How to use it in the community and towards the public.

#### ***Social justice and human rights***

- Social justice and human rights / Social aid and charity.
- Right of social minorities / Woman Rights movement(s), LGBT+, ...
- Who is foreigner here? – Issues of migration, acceptance of people of different ethnicities and interreligious relationships.
- Partnership and relationships in the community – moral emphasis of the Unitarian principles.

#### ***Spirituality in everyday life***

- Unitarian projects and programs / Theoretical starting points for today.
- Personal spirituality / Important and limit events in human life connected with family and personal life.
- Personal spirituality / Rituals in society (work, study...).

- Shared spirituality / Spiritual experience in the community: everyday and extraordinary moments (different approaches to regular gatherings and events like Flower Communion).
- Shared spirituality / Internal (community and its life) x External (for public).

*Unitarian projects and programs as public service*

- The meaning of community.
- Civil commitment in the history of Unitarianism.
- Practical possibilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

*Responsible approach to the Life and Nature*

- Spiritual dimension of ecology and approaches to the environment.
- Natural heritage (living and non-living nature) and changes of Unitarian approach to it.
- Cultural heritage (material and non-material) and changes of Unitarian approach to it.
- Future of our common home (community and environment surrounding it – can they mutually trans/form each other?).

**2) Modul N, part Pastoral work**

Started at the retreat in Litomyšl, March 27-29 2019.

**Teachers:**

Rev. Jill Mc Allister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis, US

Rev. Tera Klein, Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasadena, Starr King School for the Ministry, US

Rev. Dr. Botond Koppandi, Kolozsvári Protestáns Teológiai Intézet, Cluj, Romania.

Rev. Petr Samojský, Pražská obec unitářů, Obec širšího společenství, Board of the Unitarian Academy, Prague, Czech Republic.

Rev. Mark Shiels, The International Unitarian Church of Prague, European Unitarians Universalists, London, UK.

Rev. Vlastimil Krejčí, Obec unitářů Teplice, Czech Republic.

Mikuláš Vymětal, minister of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Czech Republic.

**Lectures:**

*Pastoral work as part of Unitarian ministry service.*

- Role of the minister in the pastoral work (possibilities, duties, rules, responsibility).
- Signals and symptoms of the need of pastoral work.
- Main principles of the pastoral work.
- Pastoral relationship and its limits, environment for pastoral work.

*Pastoral work in practice (various elements and examples).*

- Verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Pastoral work with terminally ill people.
- Pastoral work with people with mental illness.
- Pastoral work with other specific groups.
- Pastoral work and communication – workshop.

**3) Facultative module Practical spiritual exercises**

Took place in the pension Na Bělidle, July 20-23, 2019.

**Teachers:**

Sister Irena, member of the Order of Carmelite Sisters of St. Teresa, Kolín, Czech Republic.

Vladka Kopecká, certificated teacher of the Infinite Tai Chi and Infinite Chi Kung, Prague, Czech Republic.

Rev. Petr Samojský, Pražská obec unitářů, Obec širšího společenství, Board of the Unitarian Academy, Prague, Czech Republic.  
Mgr. Jiří Motl, Ph. D.  
PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, NSČU, Czech Republic.

**Program:**

Creative workshop: Who am I and who are you?  
Circles of sharing: What to share and how: what I (do not) want, what I (do not) know.  
Morning practice – idea, feeling, expression (how do I perceive my “I”).  
Circles of sensitivity in spiritual practice.  
Contemplative exercise I.  
Exercises of St. Dominic.  
Contemplative exercise II.  
Active experiencing of liturgic components (chants).  
Circles of sharing: phases of life.  
Evening practice.  
Morning practice – idea, feeling, expression (encounter).  
Daily mottos and conscious autosuggestion.  
Positive thinking, working with thinks.  
Exercise: Tai-chi.  
Unitarian meditation and prayer.  
Circles of sharing (simple life).  
Evening practice.  
Morning practice – idea, feeling, expression (flower and bouquet, I and we).  
Gathering: Flower celebration.  
Spirituality in everyday life.  
Circles of sharing (serving to others, serving to the world).

**4) Module P6: Theology**

Started at the retreat in Nečtiny, October 18-20, 2019.

**Teachers:**

Rev. Dr. Thandeka, Meadville Lombard Theological School, US  
Rev. Daniel Costley, Sevenoaks Unitarians, Kent Unitarians (Chatman, Dover), UK.  
Rev. Norbert Zsolt Racz, Kolozsvár-Belvárosi Unitárius Egyházközség, Cluj, Romania.  
Rev. Petr Samojský, Pražská obec unitářů, Obec širšího společenství, Board of the Unitarian Academy, Prague, Czech Republic.  
Rev. Mark Shiels, The International Unitarian Church of Prague, European Unitarians Universalists, London, UK.  
PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, NSČU, Czech Republic.

**Lectures:**

*Theology: faith, religion, and reflection of them.*

- What is Theology: explanation of the term, general review of its development.
- Roots and start points: Abrahamic religions, religions of the Far East and India, ethnic religions; their worldviews; theology x mythology; role of the narrative.
- Key points: God and related ideas; time and its different notions; liberalism in theology and religion.

*Theology in relationship to the individual.*

- Faith in its various forms and manifestations (general review, terms).
- Religious tradition and its meaning for the course of personal spiritual path; space for dialogue?
- I and You as the base of existential reflection (with a workshop).
- Reality versus possibilities of knowing reality (with workshop).

*Unitarian and Universalist theology.*

- Unitarianism, Universalism: roots (trinitary). history, period approaches, today, mutual relationship.
- Specifics of the Unitarian theology I.: the relationship of theology – philosophy (metaphysics) – ethics; the importance of science in the Unitarian tradition; the relationship of the Unitarianism to mystics and esoteric.
- Specifics of the Unitarian theology II. – Philosophy in the Unitarian religion, ethics in the fundamentals of the Unitarian faith.
- Religion of future? (workshop).

*Unitarian theology and its sources of inspiration.*

- Sacred texts and other religions; non-religious inspiration.
- so called “Living Bible” of Emerson and Čapek.

*Religion and spirituality.*

- Spirituality: its types, possibilities and ways of classification of spiritual development.

*Unitarian Ethos.*

- Revealed x Natural religion, creative religion.
- Highest authority, dogma, creed, wonders – can religion stay without it?
- Fundamental parts of the Unitarian ethos, principles, human model, language of respect.

*Religion and spirituality.*

- Meaning and explanation of both terms, spirituality in a religion; spirituality without religion.
- Unitarian religion, Unitarian spirituality, role of the community.

**5) Module N, Care after functioning of the community**

Started at retreat in Nečtiny October 16-17, 2019.

**Teachers:**

Rev. Dr. Thandeka, Meadville Lombard Theological School, US

Rev. Daniel Costley, Sevenoaks Unitarians, Kent Unitarians (Chatman, Dover), UK.

Rev. Norbert Zsolt Racz, Kolozsvár-Belvárosi Unitárius Egyházközség, Cluj, Romania.

Rev. Petr Samojský, Pražská obec unitářů, Obec širšího společenství, Board of the Unitarian Academy, Prague, Czech Republic.

Rev. Mark Shiels, The International Unitarian Church of Prague, European Unitarians Universalists, London, UK.

Rev. Vlastimil Krejčí, Obec unitářů Teplice, Czech Republic.

PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, NSČU, Czech Republic.

**Lectures:**

*Minister/s and community management.*

- Minister service in post-denominational age.
- “I am led, to be able to lead, I am studying to be able to teach.”

- Specifics of the work with a group, specifics of work with individuals, different approaches.
- Professionalism: how to keep universality, detachment and stay on top of things in minister work.
- Special way how to enliven the minister work.

*Role of the minister in education of the membership.*

- Pedagogical role of the minister.
- Where to find sources and inspiration for education.
- Professional bodies and organizations in the Czech Republic and abroad; their functions.

*Minister and care after functioning of the community*

- Possibilities of employing of the minister in the functioning of the community – advantages and risks.
- Missionary activities – advantages and risks for the community.
- Responsibility of the ministers for the condition of the community + workshop.
- Minister care and the functioning of the community – summarizing workshop.

## **6) Ministerial colloquia**

**Litomyšl, March 27, 2019.**

***External guests:***

Prof. Anna Hogenová, Hussite Theological Faculty, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic.

***Topics:***

Unitarian gathering.

Identity of churches and religious societies today.

Nečtiny, October 17, 2019.

***External guests:***

Dr. Martin Chadima, Czechoslovak Hussite Church, Czech Republic.

Pavel Marušinec, Religious Society of Friends, Czech Republic.

***Topics:***

Plurality of the Czech Unitarianism. Where do I stand?

Liberal religions in the Czech Republic.

## **UNITARIAN ACADEMY AND MEDIA**

- webové stránky: [www.unitarska-akademie.cz](http://www.unitarska-akademie.cz), with English version.

- Intranet of the Unitarian Academy: [intranet.unitarskaakademie.cz](http://intranet.unitarskaakademie.cz)

- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/unitarian.academy/](https://www.facebook.com/unitarian.academy/)

- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCzaRSG020pvbrM\\_szLe2ydQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzaRSG020pvbrM_szLe2ydQ).

UCzaRSG020pvbrM\_szLe2ydQ.

- Digital Zpravodaj Unitářské akademie – Reporter of the Unitarian Academy: Published monthly since 2019 in Czech and English version. Subscription at the e-mail: [info@unitarska-akademie.cz](mailto:info@unitarska-akademie.cz) – Please, write your full name and e-mail address, where you want to receive it.

## **PUBLISHING**

***Promotional materials:***

- Samojský, Petr, Three Pebbles, Praha 2019, 12 pages.

- Unitarian Academy For You. Colour leaflet DL, promoting Facebook profile of the Unitarian Academy.

- Unitarian Academy Our International Connections.

Colour leaflet DL, promoting YouTube channel of the Unitarian Academy.

***Worksheets for students:***

- Lingwood, Stephen, *Dialogy o víře: Adamsovský přístup k unitářskému pojetí evangelizace*, Praha 2019, edice Obzory Unitářské akademie, řada Teologie, sešit 3, 12 stran.

- Lingwood, Stephen, *Některé základní prvky unitářské teologie*, Praha 2019, edice Obzory Unitářské akademie, řada Teologie, sešit 2, 12 stran.

- Howe, Ant, *Zápas, vzdor a spočinutí – různé způsoby odpovědi na boží hlas*, Praha 2019, edice Obzory Unitářské akademie, řada Teologie, sešit 1, 8 stran.

- *Unitářská teologie: Jaký rámeček dáváme světu?*, Praha 2019, edice Obzory Unitářské akademie, řada Teologie, sešit 4, 28 stran.

Other worksheets and study materials are published digitally in Czech and English language, in the pdf formate at the Intranet of the Unitarian Academy.

## **UNITARIAN TEACHERS AT THE UA IN THE YEAR 2019**

### **Rev. Dr. Botond Péter Koppándi**

Botond péter Koppándi studied at the Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca (Romania), with a study visit at the Meadville Lombard Theological School (Chicago). Doctor program he absolved at the Theological Faculty in Debrecén. In the years 2000 and 2001 he worked at a research grant at Starr Kings School for the Ministry in Berkeley. After, he absolved study visits at Manchester College in Oxford and Unitarian College in Manchester. In the years 1997-2007 he worked as a minister of Transylvanian Unitarian community in Torockószentgyörgy. Since 2007 he teaches at the department of practical theology at the Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca. He is extern member of Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

### **Rev. Tera Klein**

Nowadays, she teaches at the Unitarian seminary at Starr Kings School for the Ministry in Berkeley and serves as a part-time minister at two places – for the UUA, and in the Throops Unitarian and Universalistic Community in Californian Pasadena. Tear studied at the Lombard Theological School (absolved in 2010) where she focused on the eco-spirituality in connection with the women's issue and on social topics in the ministry work.

### **Rev. Dr. Thandeka**

Unitarian and Universalistic theologian, publicist, and expert consultant. Nowadays, besides other things, she leads a project called Love Beyond Belief. In 1984 she was given the name Xhosa by the archbishop Desmond Tutu coming from the African nation Xhosa. Meaning of the name is "The loved one". She is the founder of so-called Affect Theology (i.e., emotional theology searching connections between religion and emotions with aid of the knowledge of contemporary neuroscience). Before receiving doctor's degree in Philosophy of Religion and Theology at postgraduate study at the Claremont University, she had been for sixteen years a TV producent and gained the Emmy prize. She is author of many publications and professional papers. She taught at the State University in San Francisco, at Meadville Lombard Theological School and at the Harvard University.

### **Rev. Norbert Zsolt Racz**

Since 2009 is active as minister of the Central Unitarian Community in Cluj (Transylvania). He studied at János Zsigmond Unitarus Kollegium and continued at Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca. Before being called to his present community, he worked for the Hungarian Association for Unitarian Youth (Országos Dávid Ferenc Ifjúsági Egylet – ODFIE). He is the leading expert on the Unitarian Theology, lecturing at many international Unitarian conferences and gatherings.

**Rev. Jill McAllister**

Since 1992 she works as Unitarian and Universalist minister in the US, in congregations in Oregon and Michigan. In the years 1990-1998 she worked in the board of the American Unitarian and Universalist Association. She is one of the founders of the International Council of the Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU), holding gradually the posts of treasurer, president, and program coordinator. In the latter she helped with the support and education for the Unitarian and Universalist organizations and their leaders worldwide.

At her home in Oregon, she works as a minister of the Unitarian and Universalist community in Corvallis and teaches comparative religion at the Faculty of History, Philosophy and Religion at the Oregon State University.

**Rev. Daniel Costley**

British Unitarian minister. He studied Unitarian theology at Harris Manchester College in Oxford, where he also received his ordination. In 2010 he started as minister of his first Unitarian community. During his professional life, he worked at many different posts in the British Unitarian Organization, including the post of president of so-called Ministry Strategy Group (British professional organization of ministers, securing their professional growth and education). He was also active in the board of the Unitarian ministry organization called Interview Panel. He still closely cooperates with Harris Manchester College and participates on the contemporary transformation of the Unitarian ministry education in Britain. Nowadays he leads three Unitarian communities in South-East England and is the president of the British Unitarian Historic Society. He lives in Sevenoaks with his family and dog and he is a passionate photographer.

**Mgr. Vlastimil Krejčí**

He studied Teaching at the Hussite Theological Faculty of the Charles University in Prague. Before, he had worked for six years in education of adults. His long-term interest is the topic of self-management and personal growth. Therefore, he absolved many self-management seminars and a coach-training. Nowadays, he works as a minister for the NSČU, in the community in Teplice. His profession, hobbies and spiritual praxis do suitably meet in his past-time archery.

**PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová**

A historian, editor. She studied at the Historical Institute of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, her subject was the History of Culture. Her doctor's degree she achieved in the field Czech History. After her studies, she worked in the National Heritage Board as the head of the Department of presentation and specialized promotion, later as expert redactor and editor of the magazine "Preservation of Document Reports" (*Zprávy Památkové péče*). Since 2015, she is the head of the "Religious Society of Czech Unitarians" (Náboženská společnost českých unitářů). In this organization, she works in the field of education, publishing and promotion. Since 2012 she leads and edits the magazine "Creative Life" (*Tvůrčí život*), regularly contributing in it.

**Rev. M. Div. Petr Samojský, D. Min.**

He is a minister of NSČU. His master's degree he received at the Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago and his doctor's degree at the Chicago Theological Seminary. For a long time, he has been occupied with systematic Unitarian education of ministry and laymen leaders. He is active in the field of international Unitarian activities. He is the author of many studies on the personality of N. F. Čapek and early Unitarianism in the Czechoslovakia, written in Czech and English. He is the author of the books "Spirituality (not only) for sceptics" (*Spiritualita (nejen) pro skeptiky*), "The Adventure Called Wedding" (*Dobrodružství zvané svatba*), "Landscape as a Spiritual Heritage" (*Krajina jako duchovní dědictví*) and co-author of books "Do we know, that we are not alone? Three Pillars of the Unitarian Theology" (*Víme, že nejsme sai? Tři pilíře unitářské teologie*), "At the Coast of the Ocean of Truth" (*Na pobřeží Oceánu Pravdy*) and editor of the publication "It is beautifully to live" (*Krásně je žít*).

### **Rev. Mark Shiels**

He works as a psychotherapist in London and a minister of the International Unitarian Church of Prague.

### **As guests taught at the Academy in the 2019 also following external lecturers:**

- **Mikuláš Vymětal**, minister of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Czech Republic.
- **Helen Mason, BA, MSc** (head of the Unitarian College, UK).
- **Sister Irena** (member of the Carmelite Order of St. Therese; she leads courses of practical spiritual in the Kolín monastery, she works in the field of spiritual guidance and psychotherapy),
- **Vladka Kopecká** (certificated teacher of the Infinite Tai Chi and Infinite Chi Kung),
- **prof. PhDr. Anna Hogenová, CSc.** (philosopher, educationalist, teaches at the Hussite Theological Faculty of Charles University, reader in philosophy and kinantropology),
- **ThDr. Martin Chadima, Th.D.** (theologian, teacher and minister of the Hussite Church)
- **Pavel Marušinec** (Religious Society of Friends)

## **3. CONCLUSIONS – EVALUATION OF THE FIRST THREE-YEARS CYCLE**

### **3.1. Overview of the project:**

#### **Study programme for lay people – three years**

Six compulsory thematic modules:

- Tradition
- Leadership
- Service
- Education
- Public service
- Theology

#### **Two facultative modules:**

- Practical theological exercises
- Educational stay abroad

Study program for candidates of ministry – three years

- All compulsory modules of the study program for lay people
- Extra module N, consisting of following parts:
  - Ethos of the Unitarian ministry
  - Worship in context
  - Sermon and working with text
  - Pastoral work
  - Leadership, education and community administration
  - Sharing of hope

#### **Realized:**

- 103 lectures and workshops in the study program for lay people in five modules (out of 104 planned lectures – only one lecture was missed out due to health indisposition of the lecturer). The length of each lecture was 30-60 minutes.
- 55 lectures and workshops for the ministry candidates in five educational retreats of the N module (30-120 minutes).

**Each educational retreat includes additional program:**

- Informal discussion with lectures from abroad
- Methodological seminary (system of study and support service for students)
- Proseminar focused on techniques (bibliography, working with bibliography and sources, text-structure...)
- Consultations with guarantors
- Morning meditation
- Everyday spiritual gathering
- Ministry colloquium (moderated thematic discussion on current topics, especially for ministers and ministry candidates)
- Preparation of common meal
- Cultural program (not part of every retreat)

### **Lecturers:**

#### **19 Unitarian lecturers from abroad (Transylvania, Great Britain, U. S.)**

- Rev. Sándor Kovács, Ph.D., Protestant theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca
- Rev. Eric Cherry, head of the International Office of the American Unitarian Universalist Association
- Rev. Dr. Lawrence Peers, coach and expert, US
- Rev. Sara Ascher, CEO of the ICUU, US
- Derek McAuley, chief secretary of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, UK
- Rev. Dana Lightsey, High Plains Church, Colorado, US
- Rev. John Midgley, former president of the Gen. Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, UK
- Rev. Celia Midgley, longtime member of the board of the ICUU, UK
- Rev. Diana Davies, First Unitarian Church of Oklahoma City, member of the board of directors of the MLTS<sup>1</sup>, US
- Rev. John Harley, Bristol Unitarians, former coordinator of British Unitarian Youth , UK
- Rev. Dr. Wayne Arnason, longtime president of the UUMA<sup>2</sup>, member of the board of the directors of the MLTS<sup>3</sup>, US
- Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis, US
- Rev. Sarah Tinker, Kensington Unitarians, UK
- Rev. Jill Mc Allister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis, US
- Rev. Tera Klein, Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasadena and SKSM<sup>4</sup>, US
- Rev. Dr. Botond Koppandi, Kolozsvári Protestáns Teológiai Intézet, Kolozsvár, Romania
- Rev. Dr. Thandeka, Meadville Lombard Theological School, Chicago, US
- Rev. Daniel Costley, member of the British ministerial Ministry Strategy Group, Sevenoaks, UK
- Rev. Norbert Rácz, First Unitarian Church Kolosvár, Romania

#### **5 lecturers from the NSČU**

- Rev. Petr Samojský, D.Min., Unitarian Academy
- PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, head of the board of the NSČU
- Rev. ThDr. Karolina Sofia Pavalá, Unitarian Academy

---

<sup>1</sup> Meadville Lombard Theological School

<sup>2</sup> Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association

<sup>3</sup> Meadville Lombard Theological School

<sup>4</sup> Starr King School for the Ministry

- Rev. Mgr. Vlastimil Krejčí, Unitarian Academy
- Rev. Mark Shiels, IUCP, UA

### **7 lecturers from the Czech Republic, non-members of the NSČU**

- Mgr. Pavel Frynta, lawyer
- Mgr. Lucie Fulínová, teacher
- Mgr. Bára Procházková, professional publicist
- Mikuláš Vymětal, Th.D., minister in Beroun, the minister for humanitarian activities, minorities and socially disadvantaged people in the ČCE
- Prof. Anna Hogenová, Faculty of Education of the Charles University, head of the department of Philosophy at the Hussite Theological Faculty, of the Charles University
- Dr. Martin Chadima, minister of the Czechoslovakian Hussite Church
- Pavel Marušinec, representative of the Society of Friends (Quakers)

### **3.2. Evaluation**

#### Contents:

- For the following cycle is planned to maintain all the main topics (6 in the program P, 6 in the program N)
- There will be maintained ca 2/3 of the lectures and ca. 1/3 will be thematically changed. Some of the changes will be done for better follow-up of individual lectures and avoiding of thematic overlaps, some for covering new topics. Planned changes should not be done in the conceptual side (for this seems to be chosen well) but for making some improvements.
- Other lecturers from abroad will be invited, with the intention to cover lectures and workshops thematically with a different approach. We hope to introduce in the UA significant personalities of contemporary global Unitarianism. This solution we choose also for the reason, that overwhelming majority of students evaluated lectures of lecturers from abroad as being highly interesting and useful, both for their topics as well as an opportunity to know Unitarianism in other countries. More than half of the students, regularly taking part at the UA mentioned their plan to continue in taking part in the UA events after absolving their studies.
- An evaluation form will be introduced for the lecturers from abroad (up to now, it was used only for students).
- Examples:
  - Module Tradition is to be focused more on the contributions of women for the Unitarianism and for development of liberal religious movements in Europe.
  - Lecturers: Nicole Kirk (US), Paul Rasor (Netherlands) and Ann Peart (UK)
  - Module Leadership will be focused more on European countries and significant personalities of the European Unitarianism – Lecturers: Chris Hudson (Northern Ireland), Bill Schulz (US), Inga Brandes (German Unitarians)
  - Module Forming of the Community – Roger Bertschausen (US)
  - Module Education – Diane Rollert (Canada)
  - Module Public work – Danny Crosby (GB)
  - Module Theology

#### System of the study according to results

- Categories of participants: Existing categories – student of the program for ministry candidates; student of the program for lay people. – After evaluating the development during the first three years we plan to change in following way: a) students of the program for ministry candidates; b) students; c) friends (i.e., registered participants of retreats interested in the issues, but without ambitions for systematic study and without the obligation of

assignments). – The creation of the latter category is helpful for those NSČU members, who cannot give energy and time to systematic study, but for educational and social reasons they are interested to take part in study modules. This possibility was open even before, but these people were in the “student” category and this label could be felt as firing barriers.

- Differences in the potentials and achievements of students – according to the concept of the UA, in each student is most important his or her personal progress, not comparison to other students. Each student chooses his/her pace according to personal possibilities. A standard for comparing has its role for absolvents of the N module.
- Study demands must reflect the fact, that many students are not used to systematic self-education, for this has not been required or it has not been an advantage for them in their professional lives. Some of them are also in the age of declining inquisitiveness, they are not used to active nor passive work with bibliography and other study texts.
- Completion of study: it is expectable, that first students will absolve their studies with the beginning of the upcoming cycle. It will be necessary to find rules for choosing opponents of their final works/projects and make clear, if the presentation of the final work/project will be an internal event in the UA, or if it should take place in public. Also, it is important to determine, how the final works/projects will be published (only UA Bulletin, or the Creative Life, magazine of the NSČU...)
- UA Bulletin, that was published for the first time recently, should be in future published at every retreat. For students, it is interesting to a) compare their study results with the results of other students (they can do so in the Intranet as well, but this way it will be arranged clearly), b) to see their works published may be a motivation for them.
- Work of the guarantees with students: Evaluated as crucial condition for their study progress and for their achievements. Our students who have UA as a leisure activity and not as their professional education, cannot get along without continuous support and help of their guarantees (most of them are struggling with lack of time etc.). For the next cycle it is vital to find a way of more intensive and more regular involvement of the guarantees in the work of students. It is highly appealing for us!

#### Lecturers

- According to the opinion of most board members and students, the ratio of domestic lecturers and those from abroad will be maintained unchanged in the upcoming cycle. The focus will be on the choice of personalities. Our advantages are previous experience and an extent of routine in some respects. Lecturers from abroad are for students not only teachers, but also mediators of different Unitarian traditions and cultures. For many students this is the only possibility of this kind of contacts. Inviting of foreign lecturers is a form of promotion, both in the Czech Republic and abroad and a way of maintaining important international relationships on the personal level. Due to the financial aspects, it is ideal to invite two lecturers from the US in a year.
- It was recommended to involve in teaching activities those N-students, who have already absolved minimally 2/3 of their studies (to begin with a workshop in two or three people as the best way).
- Find a way how to involve those ordained ministers NSČU, who have not been active in the UA yet. (*Suggested: chaplain service, supervision over the N-students' gatherings and feedback, leading of some particular non-scheduled activities, or colloquia.*)

#### Organization:

- Evaluation of places: for the next cycle to choose suitable places. Unsuitable (for capacity; too small): Krumlov, Kuks. Suitable (Broumov, Telč, Litomyšl, Nečtiny).

- Terms: for avoiding any overlap with other Unitarian events (both in the Czech Republic and abroad) it seems to be the last week in March and second/third week in October (with avoiding the national holiday of the Czech Statehood).
- Professionalization: The best way will be to engage a paid person for part of the organizational activities, but it is not possible in the recent situation. Nearly all members of the UA work as volunteers, and they even do not receive any payments of their travel expenses. For the future, our priority is to find sources to pay a good fundraiser. Possible coordinator for the foreign students and a fundraiser may be Lara Fuchs (Washington, DC).
- For mutual replaceability of UA organizers and simplification of all organization processes, it is necessary to make before each module a list of all the preparations (including a detailed schedule of all the services/roles/activities). It is more and more clear, how proper is to have a set of standard equipment for retreats, with given and marked contents (songbooks / equipment for interpretation / equipment for gatherings / cooking tools / facilities for coffee breaks / office supplies for lecture + business cards / publications / equipment for meditations...) For consideration: to borrow for each retreat a car, to bring all the things there and back.
- Study materials and translation: The system of printed module-guides proved to be useful. It started with the second module and later it was applied for the NSČU synods. The guide must be bilingual and comprehensive, for often it is the only study material available in both languages. The new system of buying after each module Czech literature recommended by lecturers for the Unitarian Library. Students are gradually getting used to the possibility of borrowing study materials there. For future, it would be good to make a system of marking in the Bibliography for each module all publications, available in our library. It is also possible to bring these publications to the retreat. – Foreign lecturers should be asked to choose for each of their topics three study texts (papers, not books), the reason see in the following paragraph.
- Publication activities (secondary study materials): Continually we see the necessity of publishing translations of important topics, presented by the foreign lecturers – in the form of papers. Book translations are financially too demanding, the process of translation takes too much time, and most students prefer to work with shorter texts. Publications should be not too epical, but rather utilitarian, having unified graphic design, referring to the UA. Publishing is recommended in the form of offprints, all pages including the title to be black-and-white (actually, with cover in different color, not using any special material for it). The impressions ca 50 pcs, sold for a low price, approachable also for those NSČU members, who are not students. Best: publish 2-3 volumes for a module. For help with the choice of suitable texts, we can ask our lecturers as well as partner university institutions.

### Social impact

- NSČU communities: approach those that are not involved yet.
  - 1) Improve the promotion and inform about the possibility to take part without having student duties.
  - 2) The best is to approach members directly. For example, prepare in communities a particular entrance lecture with hosted discussion as a prologue to the UA on the topic: Significance of liberal religion for modern person; talk about reasons for studying these issues. Answers, that people of past times used to find in religion, are today given partly by science, partly by state, etc. – but they do not cover the whole field of questions. These answers cannot offer the transcendence, offered by religion.
- Liberal religions have always been involved in crucial social issues. This is an insistent task for us today as well. The process of education and free academic space make up a suitable platform for constant posing of question and regeneration of our life-path, for interpretation of our mission. It is important, to continue more intensively in our educational traditions

interrupted in the Communist era and present this tendency (PR potential). In the promotion in the NSČU, it is needed to engage more students of the UA. Could we entrust them some functions and tasks during the year?

- Civil education of adult people (as possibility for gaining accreditation) – our priority is striving for accreditation. Moreover, ca 1 month before suitable modules (e.g., Tradition, Theology) organize promotion in some bigger city, near to the place of planned retreat a presentation with discussion (in public library, university hall...) to inform also non-members of the NSČU about the UA.
- Involvement of individual Unitarians and advocates of liberal religion from European countries. The contacts will be probably made via individual contacts; this is a long-term challenge. Chances: promotion at international European events and try to gain publicity with help of bigger groups via cooperation with their leaders (our current priority, also for the possibility to gain grants, are German Unitarians).
- Involvement of Unitarians from Transylvania, Great Britain, and the US: Important cooperation with their educational institutions. Best possibility is the cooperation through individuals, having sympathies to the UA. Realize the cooperation contract with the Protestant Institute and achieve close partnership with the British Unitarian College. Cooperation with the US works sufficiently, recently no strengthening is needed.
- Consideration (for the sake of completeness) involve Unitarians from other countries – now beyond our possibilities and partially beyond our current interest (possibly participation on the International U/U Ministry Training Program?). Possible way of strengthening global tights for the year 2022 may be the ICUU conference in Prague.
- Involvement of those streams and groups in the Czech society, that advocating and sympathizing with liberal religion. – Now we are in the phase of very beginning. Needed: find appropriate know-how and entrust experts in the UA commission. Make new contacts in this sphere and try to offer some kind of cooperation to university teachers.

#### Possible spheres of broadening the spectrum of activities to strengthen the position of the UA

From all the possibilities were chosen as most suitable following ways:

- Involve UA in various projects intended for all our communities and as a form of cooperation between communities of the NSČU.
- Since 2020 organize whole-week educational programs for children in the form of camps (two in the time of summer holidays – one of them focused on work with children spirituality – e.g., on the Seton's motive of climbing a mountain), the second one focused on acquaintance with discoveries and inventions made by Unitarians (science, literature, etc.: Priestley, Thoreau, Darwin, Milikan, Morse, Hardy) – a "pioneering" camp.
- Consider possibility of educational programs for adult non-members of the NSČU on topics with ethical dimension (personal relationships, sexuality, abortion, death; rites of passage: wedding, funeral...) – it is necessary to start considering pro et contra.
- Active involvement in the preparations of Hundred years of Czech Unitarianism (prepare special UA projects, take charge of some of them?).
- Organize some Unitarian educative travels/ "pilgrimages"? At least once a year? For ca 30 persons. Koloszvár, London – public monuments + educational program with a guide (as a grant-aided project).
- Send regularly official announcements about ongoing events to Unitarian/Universalist central organizations abroad (GB, Netherlands, Germany, EEU...)

#### Status and rules

- Higher influence of supporting communities (e.g., higher number of people in the board of directors of possible endowment fund).

- Current system of leadership – leadership group and commission of six members; (proportion: lay members of the NSČU / ordained ministers / external experts) proved to be successful. It is possible to strengthen each group with one member. Considerations about professional leadership are still out of discussion (except the activity of a fundraiser; see above). Consider proposal to invite in the leadership group representatives of Unitarian (educational) institutions and organizations from other countries.

#### Financing (its ways and structure, new ideas...)

- Find a stable Czech grant program.
- Establish an endowment/fund for the UA in NSČU.
- Use possible chances that would bring official accreditation (e.g., support from the Czech Ministry of Education for civil education of adult people).
- Suggestions for possible budget increase: collections at the UA events, sponsorship (including voluntary contributions from students); organize in each community, supporting the UA, once a year a benefit event with proceeds donated to the UA, sale of published educational materials.

#### Others

##### Additional programs:

- After evaluation of current programs, it was recommended to continue in all actual programs; some of them have expanded already in a positive way. This is the truth about practical seminaries, established on the ground of analysis of formal level of first works of students. These seminaries are appreciated as being very helpful.
- Similarly, during the first cycle, the informal discussions with lecturers were added. Students value them as highly beneficial.
- For student-organized gatherings, we need to gain feedback of ordained ministers.
- Establish a reader's club, led by someone of the UA leadership group. It is crucial to motivate students for reading (especially those in N-module) and recommend them reading materials actively.
- Colloquia: for opening the "half-closed door", it is important to choose as the theme of next colloquium "Different streams in Unitarianism".

#### **SWOT**

##### **Fortes:**

- First and sole educational institution of that kind and extent, following-up the endeavors of Čapek, Hašpl and Šíma.
- Project is nearly fully bilingual (Czech – English).
- Two study programs (easier and more demanding).
- Possibility of study and of participation only.
- Continuity of modules in three-years cycles enables complete missed study obligations in the next cycle.
- High quality of most lectures.
- Education of new ministers.
- Students absolving whole Academy gain good knowledge about the history and current situation of the NSČU and Unitarianism worldwide. They get acquainted not only with the ideas of Unitarianism, but also the way, how its organizations work (rules, finance, activities, potential...).
- Students know more about themselves and about Unitarianism and Unitarians worldwide.
- UA is a free and relatively independent platform for discussion and development.
- Simplification of the organization and leadership system in the second cycle (we have the basic know-how).

**Failings:**

- Recently, we have only few foreign students.
- We do not use sufficiently the potential of gradually made-up partnerships with foreign organizations.
- For most students, it is not affordable to pay for their studies, even not partially.
- We did not achieve to convince leaders of some of our communities that UA is beneficial.
- We did not achieve yet part of our ordained ministers that education in the UA is something they should be interested in.
- Not the whole financing of the UA project is provided from the NSČU budget (only 2/3 of it).
- There is not enough accessible information about the UA.
- The results are not visible in communities and public enough.

**Chances:**

- Present Unitarianism to the public; a way how to come in touch with public.
- Possibility to gain participants from non-Unitarian, but liberal-religiously oriented public.
- Maintain personal contacts with members of different NSČU communities.
- Maintain personal and institutional contacts with Unitarians from abroad.
- Gain financial support from grant programs.
- Any form of cooperation with Czech universities.
- Gain some form of accreditation.
- Possibility to use current awareness about the UA positively and inform about the UA in Unitarian magazines (Unitarische Blätter, Unifier, Inquirer...), on websites and at Unitarian events.

**Threats:**

- UA seems useless to some leaders of the NSČU communities, especially they do not support financing the UA from the NSČU budget.
- Questioning of the idea leading the UA.
- UA is not anchored as an individual subject in the NSČU organization. This makes it highly vulnerable to any "political pressures in the NSČU.
- UA use to be associated with a particular group of thought in the NSČU. This must be disproved on the mental level (for it is an artificial construct) and through deeds (openness; conditioned by a certain quality, anyhow).
- For future, we must count with a decrease of new students, coming from the NSČU (due to numbers of membership).

*Annual Report about the activities of the Unitarian Academy for the year 2019.*

*Worked out by the members of the work committee of the Unitarian Academy, 20. 1. 2020.*

*Approved at the commission meeting at 28. 1. 2020.*

*Photos: Ondřej Svatoš, Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová.*

*Published by the Unitarian Academy of the NSČU, 2020.*