

UNITARIAN ACADEMY ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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1. ON ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITARIAN ACADEMY

1.1. UA – SECOND YEAR OF THE SECOND CYCLE

A Danish proverb says: Once is nothing, twice is habit. Last year it seemed, that if we summon all our strengths and go through all the changes brought by pandemics, all difficulties would be soon gone, and everything would return soon into our old way. Now it seems, that pandemics will stay with us some more time, but this situation does not surprise us anymore and we are getting used to it. Such was the situation of our UA events – some of them, especially those taking place in summer, Practical spiritual exercises, and summer camp for children – took place in normal routine. Both profile events, spring and autumn modules were significantly affected by the given conditions. On the organizational side, we were well prepared for the situation and managed it quite well. This Annual report documents activities and changes of the Unitarian Academy (UA) in the past year 2021 and in short mentions also plans, that the educational institution of the Religious Society of Czech Unitarians makes for future.

Principal success achieved by the UA this year is the fact, that despite complicated situation we accomplished not only to maintain, but even to extend our activities – annual summer camp for children was added with regular meetings during the whole year. In these meetings, members of several our congregations took part (OŠS, OUT, LOU and POU). Moreover, a separate on-line course of lectures was introduced.

At the beginning of this year, a moderate change in the UA leading body – UA commission. For Matyáš Müller, who resigned from his post, the ÚSS NSČU elected early February 2021 a new member, biologist Roman Figura from the Department of Philosophy and History of Science, Faculty of Science, Charles University. After Matyáš Müller and Filip Jaroš, Roman Figura is now third member of our commission, coming from this department, established in early 90ies by the philosopher and biologist Zdeněk Neubauer. It is worth to mention, that Zdeněk Neubauer gave several lectures in Unitaria during the 70-80ies and for many years was one of our sympathizers.

Professional program of the UA was started in March with modules *Worship in its Contexts* and *Work for Unitarian Congregations*. Due to the pandemic conditions, the module took place on-line only, with support of the UA studio, made in the Unitaria House. According to our tradition, several lecturers from abroad were involved in its program. All events were interpreted, so it was possible to follow them both in Czech and in English.

The next event followed in late June: in Sloup u České Lípy took place third season of the Practical Spiritual Exercises. Besides agenda of UA commission members (Roman Figura: *Eleusinian Mysteries*; Petr Samojský: *Dyadic Relationship and Responsive Reading in the*

Unitarian Liturgy), Robert Elva Frouz presented his program *Introduction into Presence* and Jakub Kroulík with his workshop *Hypnosis and Suggestion in Everyday Life*. The last part mentioned was added with the workshop *Work with Autosuggestion and Daily Paroles according to N. F. Čapek* led by Petr Samojský. Daily program was framed with morning creative workshops led by Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová and evening Sharing cycles led by Petr Samojský, Jiří Motl and Roman Figura. Third year of summer spiritual exercises confirmed suitability of the syncretic conception, chosen for our Unitarian milieu and maybe also a certain attractiveness of this format. After a year of on-line working, joy of meeting and of a meaningful activity was tangible. The question remains, whether this program would remain in this form (and it is not a small thing!), or whether it would lead to deeper revival of specifically Unitarian forms of spirituality.

Summer camp for children took place in Opolenec and Lázně na Šumavě and its main theme was *Expedition in the Land of Tales*. Program was divided in two weeks. The first week was restricted by the capacity of 15 children (for participant older than 3 years). The second week of the camp was more focused on Unitarian topics, for it followed the whole-year work with our youth-group. This was the reason, why only those, who were involved in this work, could take part. On the background of tales of the whole-camp-game, participants familiarized with the environment and rules of the Wood Wisdom, cultivated their creativity, cooperativity, and self-knowledge, and gained knowledge about Unitarian spirituality, ethics, and history in a playful way. The whole program was crowned with a festive bonfire. The camp was realized with financial support of the NSČU. Organizational and program-making group members were: Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová (OŠS), Petr Samojský (POU), Jana Rašková (OUT), Anežka Kolajová, Dáša Kmínková and Eva Nejedlová (LOU). With its technical organization in situ helped Petra Zelená, Ondřej Svatoš and Eva Pulcmanová.

Both autumn modules, *Sermon and work with text* and *Education* took part in person, after the eighteen-month on-line period. (The spring module 2020 was rescheduled to the end of cycle and the autumn module 2020 and spring module 2021 were made on-line.) We gathered at an approved place – in the educational center of the Schola naturalis in the charming Veltrusy Castle. Since there was an unsteady situation, precluding any reasonable planning of travelling abroad, our participants from other countries (Erica Hewitt and Sarah Lammert from the UUA; Helen Mason, the head of the Unitarian College, educational institute of the British Unitarians; and Kinga Réka Székely from the Educational department of the Bishop's office of the Transylvanian Unitarians) joined our program online. This way proved to be highly effective during our past online modules. Anyhow, in this “combined” form of organization, it also showed its weak sides. There were some technical limits, and lack of socialization. The more we enjoyed lectures and live workshops led by Czech lecturers – some of them are our ordained ministers (Petr Samojský, Vlastimil Krejčí), non-ordained ministers (Jana Rašková) and lay leaders (Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová and Štěpán Mairovský). Another interesting point was a short excursion around the castle park, with historical, scientific and etymological commentary of Roman Figura.

An innovation of this year of the UA was on-line course of lectures for both UA students as well for interested Unitarian members and of broader public. Aim of this cycle was, offer inspiration about a wide spectrum of themes, associated with practical life, and presented from the Unitarian point of view. The themes were sorted in six main groups: Spirituality / Education and Personal Development / Unitarianism and its traditions / Culture, Art, Creativity / Ecology / Social justice. Seven lectures took place since April to October. They included genuinely Unitarian topics like Tradition of the Flower Ceremony (Petr Samojský), Women's

movement in Unitarianism and Universalism (Nicole Kirk), or current situation in the NSČU – Unitaria today, programs for children and youth (Jana Rašková, Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, Markéta Frellová) or commented presentation of the membership-research in NSČU (Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová) followed with open discussion. Programs on ecological, social and spiritual topics were presented at lectures: “Permaculture as an approach to life and how it can be inspiring for Unitarians? (Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová), “Islamic Law” (Štěpán Mairovský) and “Spirituality in Architecture” (Michal Kohout).

The past year 2021 confirmed vitality of the UA project again. It is worth to appreciate, that even organizational and logistic complications related to the pandemic situation did not prevent UA from extending its activities. Nevertheless, this situation had a strong impact on the UA activities. Most of all, we missed the opportunity of personal contact, especially with lecturers and participants from abroad.

Michal Kohout

1.2. OUTLOOK FOR THE COMING YEARS

Just before publication of this Annual report, the results of the census of the Czech Republic were published. When we look at the data, interesting for the NSČU members, i.e., how many people have professed tradition and faith of the Czech Unitarianism, the result of 186 person can be surprising, especially regarding the fact, that the number of paying members of the NSČU is 290 and there are many non-paying supporters and sympathizers. We can expect many opinions and even more interpretations of the census data. We may stay with the data shortly, for it has some connection to the UA and its activities – and with its outlook for the coming years.

It is evident and without any doubt, that the UA is inherently connected with the NSČU and one of its missions is promotion and deepening of the traditions of Czech Unitarianism. During the last years, we are affected by the covid pandemic in all aspects of our activities. Unsurprisingly, this also impacts the practical activities of the UA. We perceive an unfavorable atmosphere in the Czech and global society, which also penetrates in our communities. We believe that this issue must be in the center of our future activities: strengthening of hope, mutual trust, and tolerance. These are the main values that must be our base to start with and work actively on them. We are looking out for the time (and hopefully, it is coming already), when we will be able to extend program of the UA according to the ideas and plans, we have made in last years:

- Return to the full program of the UA when possible.
- Extend promotion in social media Facebook and Instagram.
- Start module of the educational fellowships abroad
- Continue in making short film documents from the Unitarian communities and institutions in the Czech Republic and abroad.
- In the long-term perspective consider another level of professionalization of the UA.
- Renew cooperation with Unitarians abroad, mostly in Europe, with the intention to invite them to participation in our programs.

Of course, results data of the census do not make any objective statement about the whole situation, but undoubtedly, they serve as an indicator. But if the UA can contribute to deepening of the Czech Unitarian identity among our members and help with promotion of knowledge about Unitarianism among Czech public, this should be included in our outlook for the coming years.

Petr Samojský

2. SUMMARIES

2.1. ORGANIZATION, PERSONNEL, ECONOMY

UA board:

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

Director:

- prof. Ing. arch. Michal Kohout, elected for the period 2020-2022 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. Roman Figura

STUDENTS

On December 31st, 2021, there were 25 students enrolled, 12 in active study. The rest of student take part at the UA events without any aspirations for completion of the studies. Some participants take part regularly at the UA events, but do not want to become students.

ECONOMY

In 2021, total revenues of the Unitarian Academy were 356, 122 CZK (including balance from 2020: 299,902 CZK).

In 2021, total expenditures of the Unitarian Academy were 245, 201 CZK.

On December 31st, 2021, the funds available to the Unitarian Academy amount to 410, 823 CZK.

SUPPORTERS

In 2021, the Unitarian Academy was financially supported by:

- The Religious Society of Czech Unitarians – 291,600 CZK.
- Czech Unitarian community “Wider Fellowship” (*Obec širšího společenství*) – 45,000 CZK.

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

DETAILED TABULAR SUMMARY OF THE UA ECONOMIC IN THE YEAR 2021.

UA plans for the 2021	Proposal	Settlement
Expenditures		
Spring Educational Retreat - Accommodation	40 000	0

Spring Educational Retreat - Diets	30 000	0
Autumn Educational Retreat - Accommodation	40 000	23 710
Autumn Educational Retreat - Diets	30 000	30 137
Practical Spiritual Exercises - Accommodation	20 000	20 840
Practical Spiritual Exercises - Diets	30 000	8 848
Broadband for streaming	35 000	0
Interpreting – Educational Retreats	80 000	77 839
License for two ZOOM language channels for a year	10 000	7 984
Translations	30 000	21 255
Refreshments	12 000	0
Guarantors – Contracts for work	25 000	11 050
Travel expenses – Czech Republic	15 000	236
Travel expenses – Foreign lecturers	65 000	0
Fees – Czech lecturers – obligatory modules	10 000	0
Fees – Czech lecturers – Practical spiritual exercises	10 000	5 000
Fees – Czech lecturers – Colloquia	4 000	0
Publications	30 000	18 423
Video for web	0	7 600
Abroad promotion: printed material, travels	0	0
Participation at the Educational stay for children	10 000	0
Stationery	0	3 554
Small equipment, technical, etc.	0	8 725
Summary	486 000	245 201

Incomes		
Balance from the last years	299 902	299 902
NSČU Budget	350 000	291 600
External subsidies and grants	0	0
Donations, voluntary contributions	100 000	45 000
Participation of the students	25 000	19 522
Summary	774 902	656 024
Transferred for the next year		410 823

We thank all lecturers, for their great work and especially to those, who did not charge any fees and even their travel costs. We thank to those guarantors and members of our board, who work for the Unitarian Academy voluntarily, and to those, who renounced any payments of their travel costs. The saved finances will be used for improvement of our activities.

Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová

2.2. TRAINING, PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS

Modules studied in 2021

SPRING EDUCATIONAL RETREAT

Lectures:

Rev. Roger Bertschausen, First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin, U. S.
Rev. Lara Cowtan, Vancouver Unitarians, CAN
Rev. Danny Crosby, Dunham Road Unitarian Chapel Altrincham a Queens Road Unitarian Free Church, Urmston, U. K.
Rev. Alicia Roxanne Forde, UUA, U. S.
Prof. Michal Kohout, Unitarian Academy, Prague Unitarian Church, Czech Republic.
Rev. Vlastimil Krejčí, Unitarian Academy, OUT, Czech Republic.
Rev. Petr Samojský, D.Min., Unitarian Academy, Prague Unitarian Church, OŠS, Czech Republic.
Mgr. Štěpán Mairovský, Prague Unitarian Church, Czech Republic.
PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, the head of ÚSS NSČU, Czech Republic.

MODULE N – PART “WORSHIP IN CONTEXT”

Took place online as a ZOOM videoconference, March 24.–25., 2021.

Lectures:

Religious gathering today – An anachronism, or an important part of social life? (To the meaning and aim of spiritual gatherings) / Danny Crosby
Worship as a path to individual development and to making and strengthening of the community / Petr Samojský
Role of minister in community – making in the context of gathering / Danny Crosby
What makes a gathering? (Principal and additional parts, the process of preparations of a worship, sources and materials) / Vlastimil Krejčí
Stability x variability in liturgy, intimacy x openness of a space of a Unitarian worship / Roger Bertschausen
Traditional and alternative forms of Unitarian worship (workshop) / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
Attributes of a worship (concept of space; time; people) and attributes of a minister (appearance, impression, behavior) / Lara Cowtan

MODULE “WORK FOR UNITARIAN COMMUNITIES”

Took place online as a ZOOM videoconference, March 26.–28., 2021.

Lectures:

Work for Unitarian communities: What does it mean? (On the community and membership) / Danny Crosby
Mission of the congregation and its fulfilling. Plans for activities, characteristics of the congregation, concept of development – involvement of members in prepares and realization; tradition and habit – development dynamics / Petr Samojský
Sharing of ideas: In which ways is the Unitarian community beneficial for me and how do I contribute to fulfill its mission (hosted discussion) / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
Making the environs of Unitarian communities: spaces, symbolics, atmosphere, relationships / Roger Bertschausen
Spiritual gathering as a pillar of activities of every Unitarian community – how to get involved? / Lara Cowtan
Volunteering: in society and in Unitarian communities / Štěpán Mairovský

Additional programs: typology, description, and how to use them / Michal Kohout
Additional programs: workshop / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
Pastoral work in practice, making surroundings for help, openness, confidence; relationships among members, personal limits / Roger Bertshausen
Institutional support for congregations / Alicia Forde
Institutional support for congregations in the NSČU / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
Unitarian community in the 21st century: multicultural, multigenerational, safe for all; approach to ethical issues of our times – how to deal with public issues and to public in general? / Vlastimil Krejčí
Introversion vs. openness of the Unitarian communities, presentation for public, what should we present, who, how and in which ways / Petr Samojský
For whom are we here and for whom do we want to be? (Panel discussion followed with workshop)

AUTUMN EDUCATIONAL RETREAT

Lectures:

Rev. Erika Hewitt, UUA, U. S.

Rev. Sarah Lammert, UUA, U. S.

Helen Mason, head of the Unitarian College, U. K.

Rev. Kinga Réka Székely, Transylvania, Unitarian Bishop Office, Romania

Rev. Petr Samojský, Unitarian Academy, Prague Unitarian Church, OŠS, Czech Republic.

Rev. Vlastík Krejčí, OUT, Unitarian Academy, Czech Republic

Jana Rašková, OUT, non-ordained minister, Czech Republic

PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, head of the ÚSS NSČU, Unitarian Academy, Czech Republic

Mgr. Štěpán Mairovský, vice-head of the ÚSS NSČU, Prague Unitarian Church, Czech Republic

MODULE N – PART “SERMON AND WORK WITH TEXT”

Took place in Veltrusy, October 13.–14., 2021.

Lectures:

Tradition – where does sermon come from, freedom of pulpit and freedom of church bench, changes during historic development / Petr Samojský

Sermon in context of a long-time conception and mission of congregation, sermon in relation to other programs, topics of the sermon and how to work with them / Erika Hewitt

Goals: Therapeutic effect of sermon and other goals, practical examples / Kinga Réka Székely

Sources: Where can we gain inspiration from, key for choosing topics, friends and social group as a source of impulses; shall we base our sermons on our personal experiences or on objective facts? / Helen Mason

How to compose sermon in worship: with or without reflection? / Vlastimil Krejčí

Methods for preparation and presentation; dramatic reading, impromptu speech / Petr Samojský

Performance: how to find your own style + practical examples / Petr Samojský

Preparation of sermon: workshop / Petr Samojský

MODULE EDUCATION

Took place in Veltrusy, October 15.–17., 2021.

Lectures:

Education in Unitarian communities as an important aspect of our tradition / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová

Unitarian communities as a space for natural growth of educational level of members in general and the role of ministers in this process / Vlastimil Krejčí

Continual education of leaders and active members as a path to a self-confident and healthy congregation / Helen Mason

How can community prevent personal crisis of members + landmarks in life and rites of passage as an important aspect congregational life / Jana Rašková

Programs for personal and group sharing and support (theory and practical examples) / Petr Samojský

How to start a program for children, its contents and goals, didactic materials, tools, work with parents, education to Unitarianism? / Jana Rašková

Making a support and respectful framework for activities with young people / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová

Seniors – substantial part of our membership / Kinga Réka Székely

Adults – development programs according to the needs and interests of members / Petr Samojský

Making and improving of congregation according to current needs and topics – creative impulses / Sarah Lammert, Elizabeth Norton

Community as an opportunity for civil activism and for democracy, leading to a responsible approach to life / Štěpán Mairovský

In which ways and forms can we offer education? Role of the central organization; what do you need? (workshop) / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová

Educational goals and competences of Unitarian congregations (hosted discussion)

Methods and forms of education and teaching, main didactic rules / Helen Mason

Making program of educational character, including structure, realization plan, way of evaluation / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová

OTHER EVENTS MADE BY THE UA

PRACTICAL SPIRITUAL EXERCISES, FACULTATIVE MODULE

Took place in Herberk Ferdinanda Dobrotivého in Sloup v Čechách, June 24.–27., 2021.

Lecturers:

Diacon Robert Elva Frouz, therapist, Holostřevy, Czech Republic

Mgr. Jakub Kroulík, hypnosis expert, mentalist, Prague, Czech Republic

Mgr. Roman Figura, Faculty of Science, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Rev. Petr Samojský, Prague Unitarian Church, OŠS, executive board of the Unitarian Academy Prague, Czech Republic

PhDr. Jiří Motl, Ph.D., Prague, Czech Republic

PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, NSČU, Prague, Czech Republic

Program:

A moment for a blank sheet (creative workshop for participants to know each other) / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
Sharing circles / Petr Samojský, Jiří Motl, Roman Figura
Morning practice – Towards the Light / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
Introduction to the presence – contemplation and work with own body / Robert Elva Frouz
Eleusinian mysteries / Roman Figura
Sharing circles / Petr Samojský, Jiří Motl, Roman Figura
Morning practice – Everyday good work / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
Dyadic relationship and responsive reading in the Unitarian liturgy / Petr Samojský
Hypnosis and suggestion in our everyday life / Jakub Kroulík
N. F. Čapek and work with autosuggestion in our tradition / Petr Samojský
Sharing circles / Petr Samojský, Jiří Motl, Roman Figura
Morning practice – To the edge of silence / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová
Sharing cycles / Petr Samojský, Jiří Motl, Roman Figura
Good thought / Petr Samojský
Good thought: Spiritual gathering and Farewell ceremony / shared leading

A QUEST TO THE COUNTRY OF STORIES, SUMMER CAMP FOR CHILDREN

Šumava, Opolenec, Lazny, July 11.–24. 2021; organized in cooperation with the OŠS.
Fourteen days summer camp for children, introducing them in a natural, creative, and playful way with everyday spirituality, with Unitarian and ethical principles and with a healthy way of working in an organized group or community. The main motive of the camp – stories – related to knowing various personalities from Unitarian circles and their lives and works.

Day-by-day program:

My story and its guide (Sylvia Plath and Robert Fulghum)
Listen to the stories of other people (Jan Zikmund and Ferenc Dávid)
Each of us is a resort to someone, a protector of something (Charles Darwin and Emma Wedgwood)
There are no big and small stories (Edith Holden and Beatrix Potter)
Everyone can help! (Albert Schweitzer and Florence Nightingale)
Courage to be courageous (Lotta Hübschmann and Clarissa Barton)
Life is full of changes
Communication and “spell” of understanding (Samuel Morse, Tim Berners-Lee)
Culture and wildness: harmony with nature (Henry David Thoreau, Frank Lloyd Wright)
Look up to the Universe, look down to the slightest things (Maria Mitchell, Andrews Millikan)
Be silent or not? (Rachel Carson, Alister Hardy)
“Justice” in the world; who cares for it? (James Joseph Reeb, Ashley Montagu)
Ordinary and exceptional (Aurelia Reinhardt, Margaret Barr)

Leading and organization:

PhDr. Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová, president of the ÚSS NSČU, member of the VV UA, OŠS
Jana Rašková, OUT
Anežka Kolajová

Participation on preparation of programs:

Dagmar Kmínková, LOU

Eva Nejedlová, LOU

Rev. M. Div. Petr Samojský. D. Min., Unitarian Academy, POU, OŠS

Petra Zelená, OUT

CYCLE OF LECTURES

April 29.: Flower Ceremony – a challenge to the Postmodernity / Petr Samojský

May 27.: Permaculture as an approach to the life – how could it be inspiring for Unitarians? /
Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová

June 17.: Islamic Law / Štěpán Mairovský

August 5.: Spirituality in the Architecture / Michal Kohout

August 19.: Unitaria today, programs for children and youth: what can we offer and what can
we do for further development of this activities? / Jana Rašková, Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová,
Markéta Frelová

September 16.: Women's movement in Unitarianism and Universalism / Nicole Kirk

October 21.: NSČU membership: commented presentation of results of the membership
research in our organization; followed with discussion / Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová

WEBSITE OF THE UNITARIAN ACADEMY

Website: www.unitarska-akademie.cz, with English version.

Intranet of the Unitarian Academy: intranet.unitarska-akademie.cz.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/unitarian-academy/.

YouTube: www.unitarska-akademie.cz/youtube.

PUBLICATIONS

In 2021 it was temporary interrupted.

Made by Kristýna Ledererová Kolajová.