



ICUU

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF UNITARIANS AND UNIVERSALISTS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

International Unitarian Non-profit Expands Leadership with (a) New 501(c)(3) Status, (b) Continuing International Democracy Work, (c) Strengthening Partner-Church Engagement and (d) Supporting Monthly Global Reflection Series

ICUU Receives 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status

[Hartford, CT USA] — Aug. 25, 2026 — The International Community of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) is pleased to announce that it has been granted 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status by the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS), formally acknowledging ICUU as a charitable nonprofit organization:

“Obtaining 501(c)(3) status is a transformative milestone for the ICUU and for the broader Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist world,” asserts **Reverend Justine Magara**, Advisory Group Member of the ICUU. “It formally establishes the ICUU as a recognized charitable organization, opening the door to tax-deductible donations, foundation grants, and long-term financial partnerships that have previously been out of reach. This means contributions to international UU work can finally be made in a way that is both financially advantageous and structurally secure and signals to partners, governments, and global NGOs that the international UU movement is professionally organized, accountable, and ready to collaborate on humanitarian, educational, and justice-oriented projects.”

ICUU Supports the Launching of Global Reflection Series

With its new-found U.S. nonprofit status, ICUU is supporting the launching, by the Unitarian Universalist Worldwide Youth Network, (uuwyn.org), of a monthly global reflection series, creating a new space for global Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist connection. Services will be broadcast on [UUWYN's YouTube channel](#).

“By gathering voices, music, rituals, and stories from around the world, these services will help participants feel part of a truly international movement—one rooted in shared values, but expressed through diverse cultures, languages, and spiritual practices, says new UUWYN Board member **Bianca Noroñas**. “For many people, this will be the first time they see an international dimension to the UU/Unitarian family. Congregations can use these services to highlight justice issues faced by partner communities, celebrate milestones in international UU work, and build relationships that lead to shared projects, youth exchanges, and cross-cultural learning.”

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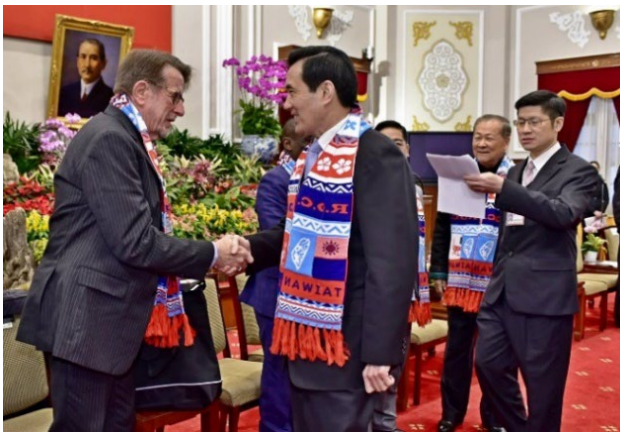
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ICUU Expands International Democracy Work

This fall, ICUU members will be active internationally in both Europe and Asia, advancing democracy, human rights, and Unitarian partnership work. The ICUU's **Bruce Knotts**, has been invited to Taipei in September to moderate the World League for Freedom and Democracy (WLFD) annual conference ([WLFD - Freedom & Democracy](#)). WLFD was



ICUU's Bruce Knotts with Ma Ying-jeou former President of Taiwan.

founded in 1954 has been a major force in global democracy advocacy, uniting representatives from more than 100 countries and has been active in attempting to help restore real democracy in Hungary. "Bruce's leadership at the WLFD conference is far more than a ceremonial honor—it represents the culmination of a lifetime spent advancing human rights, diplomacy, and democratic values across the globe," explains Rev. Magara.

Knotts' career includes decades in the U.S. Foreign Service and also includes tenure as Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO), where he organized the first United Nations-sponsored workshops on LGBTIQ+ human rights at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. "Bruce's earlier advocacy in Taiwan contributed to the nation's adoption of same-sex marriage protections, making Taiwan the first country in Asia to do so," highlights ICUU AG member **Shahan Islam**. "His return to Taiwan, in a way, represents a professional homecoming and we at the ICUU are appreciative of his outstanding work," declares Islam.

ICUU Strengthens Hungary-Transylvania Connections



ICUU's Dr. Robert Kokenyesi
before the Ferenc David
statue

The ICUU is also strengthening Hungarian and Transylvanian Unitarian partner church connections by welcoming to its Advisory Group **Dr. Robert Kokenyesi**, retired professor of anatomy and physiology, who has been active in partner-church relationships for more than three decades. A native of Hungary who immigrated to the United States in 1982, Dr. Kokenyesi is fluent in Hungarian and has been a central figure in sustaining Transylvanian Unitarian religion, literature, and community life. He has served as a translator and essential driver of Unitarian partner-church work across multiple U.S. congregations. "We are incredibly honored to have 'the Doctors K'

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as I fondly say, playing such an important role in international Unitarian work,” exclaims Islam. By “Doctors K”, he is apparently referencing also ICUU Advisory Group member Dr. Gábor Kiss, who is travelling this fall to Hungary and Kolozsvár, Transylvania where he stet hopes to deepen long-established ties between partner churches and members of the Hungarian Unitarian Church organization.

Last fall, UUWYN, to which many of the ICUU Advisory Group members also belong, sent youth from different continents to Kolozsvár to attend the 47th Annual Ferenc David Unitarian Youth Association, where they were welcomed with extraordinary hospitality by leaders including Revs. Zita Magyari, Zsolt Elekes, Cessi Mezei of the Hungarian Unitarian Church, as well as by its leader Bishop István Kovács.

About the ICUU

The International Community of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) is dedicated to strengthening global Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist connections through worship, partnership, education, justice work, and cultural exchange. ICUU supports emerging UU communities, fosters international collaboration, and uplifts the historic Unitarian centers of Transylvania and beyond.

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