



Lea and Petra Williams

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Location: Czech Republic



What we do: Leading the Anglican congregation in Brno and developing a vibrant Christian community where people can meet Jesus and grow as disciples.

Dear friends,

Recently, we came across a thought-provoking article by Stefan Paas, a professor of missiology in the Netherlands, where he reflects on mission in highly secularised societies like ours in the Czech Republic. He reminds us that in the midst of constant exposure to scepticism and the marginalisation of faith communities, we should remember that “mission is about making small enclaves of beauty and goodness, reflecting the goodness and beauty of God, fully aware that these enclaves are vulnerable... they are welcomed signs of God’s inbreaking kingdom” (2021:151). Though we may at times feel that our efforts are small and fragile in light of the cultural challenges we face, we give thanks to God for the gracious and beautiful ways he is at work in the lives of those we serve. We also want to thank all of you who faithfully remember us in your prayers.



Ready to paint a nursery

As we write, a new academic year is beginning. Our children were excited to return to their friends and routines, but we were also grateful for the happy times we enjoyed together over the summer break, with various day trips to nearby cultural sites, swimming in lakes and ponds, and of course, eating our bodyweights in ice cream!

For Petra, the summer period was once again busy overseeing what we call “volunteer marathons” at Vesna, during which some of the larger-scale maintenance work was completed. In addition to volunteers from corporate partners, we as a church, provided a team each day, redecorating the nursery for Ukrainian children, classrooms, and a common room. It was hot work, but the opportunity to serve together strengthened relationships, and we hope our efforts will serve as both a witness to our faith and a blessing to those attending Vesna’s educational programmes.

As many of you know, Brno is a young city, home to around 85,000 students – about one in five of the total population. Until now, our ministry to young people has mainly been in English, but starting this September, Lea will be supporting the work of UKH (University Christian Movement, or Univerzitní křesťanské hnutí in Czech). This will involve leading UKH’s efforts across the universities in Brno and supporting the national team as we equip students to live and share their Christian faith on campus through Bible studies, evangelistic weeks, guest lectures, and more. Please pray for this important work; a recent Pew Research survey found that among Czechs aged 16–29, 91 per cent identify as having no religion, and 80 per cent never pray.

Support Lea and Petra Williams:
churchmissionsociety.org/williams

**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



Earlier this month we held a residential training week for student leaders from across the country. It was an opportunity to celebrate God's work in the past academic year, reflect together on the letter to the Colossians, pray and brainstorm, with the goal of helping students across the universities to "think, believe, and live the Christian faith". We are blessed to have some wonderful and creative young people eager to put their faith into action during their university years. Please pray that through opportunities to learn and serve, both in university and the church, these students will be nurtured and equipped to live out the Christian faith. We're excited to see what God will do through them.

After returning to Brno from the residential training, we

hosted our first public lecture of the academic year that very evening. Our guest speaker was Cecilia Brassett, Teaching Professor of Human Anatomy at Cambridge University, who was in Brno as a conference speaker at Masaryk University. Her talk to us, titled My Amputation, offered insights into her work and faith and how they interact – she spoke with such joy and conviction. A vivid image she shared was the need for her own "amputation" – to resign her position at the height of her career as a surgeon, drawing a parallel between her "addiction" to performing surgeries and a gangrenous limb that needed to be removed. She linked this to Matthew 18:9: If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire. Her message sparked a lively debate, with Cecilia continuing to engage the students on the street even after the venue had closed. She left a lasting impression on everyone.

Regular meetings have kicked off, slightly delayed due to the flooding, but attendance has been strong.

At our Sunday service last week, we marked Harvest, giving thanks to God for his good gifts to us in creation. Instead of traditional food donations, we collected nappies, wet wipes, and sanitary products for distribution by Vesna. It was a joyous time followed by a shared meal with various international dishes. We feel so blessed to serve this community, witnessing people grow in faith, commitment to one another, and recently, in taking on more responsibilities.

Thank you, as ever, for your partnership. We are continually encouraged by knowing that you are journeying with us. Please continue to pray with us that the beauty of our witness, love, and care – testimonies to God's ultimate beauty and goodness – will serve as small, but significant, enclaves of his inbreaking Kingdom, reflecting his grace even in the midst of the challenges we face.

With love and gratitude,

Lea and Petra



Photos from top to bottom: At a traditional village festival with Petra in regional dress; Lea chatting with university students; an evening with Cecilia Brassett; delivering supplies to Vesna



Going further with Church Mission Society

Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world.

It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges.

Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/jesus-never-gives-up

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