



# 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.



**Bringing hope** where people have given up on God and the church

Dear friends,

*“Even when you know someone well, I find that if you don’t talk about the little things on a regular basis, it’s hard to talk about the big things.” – David Brooks, How to Know a Person*

Lea has been reading this book by David Brooks recently, and this quote struck a chord. While Brooks isn’t writing from a Christian perspective, he highlights how small, everyday interactions create the conditions for deeper, more meaningful conversations. This resonates with what we’ve seen in our ministry here in Brno. The casual conversations over coffee, the shared laughter at a community meal, the chance encounters in passing, these are the spaces where trust is built, where faith is explored and where hope takes root.



*Rails of clothes ready for spring at Vesna.*

This slow, steady work reminds us of the phrase *the Three Mile an Hour God* from Kosuke Koyama, a Japanese theologian who reflected on how God moves at walking pace, the speed of love. Jesus’ ministry was full of unhurried encounters: meals shared with strangers, conversations on the road, stories told in everyday settings. His was not a ministry of grand strategies or instant results, but of walking alongside people, meeting them where they were. This has been a great encouragement to us as we seek to walk alongside people from many different backgrounds, whether students exploring faith for the first time, long-term workers making a home in Brno or refugees rebuilding their lives after fleeing war.

One of the great privileges of ministry is walking alongside people as they grow in faith, wherever they are starting from. Recently, Lea had the joy of spending a long weekend at a UKH (University Christian Movement) residential, where we worked with student leaders from across the country. It was a blessed time of equipping students to share their faith, whether through talks, Bible studies or one-to-one conversations.

We spent time in Luke’s Gospel, reflecting on the power of God’s Word and how the message of Jesus is not just something we believe personally, but something we are called to live out in our daily interactions and to articulate clearly to others. It was encouraging to see students take steps in confidence, whether leading a Bible study for the first time, sharing their testimony or thinking through how they could better engage their peers in conversations about faith.

With students returning from their exam period, university Bible studies are now back up and running. We’re studying John’s Gospel in English and Philippians in Czech, providing a space for students, both local and international, to explore Scripture together.

Looking ahead to Easter, students are also planning public lectures and ways to engage evangelistically. At

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



Christmas, they baked hundreds of gingerbread biscuits, which we gave out at the university along with words about Christmas. This led to many conversations about the message and hope of Christmas, God with us, and to opportunities to pray for students and staff. Please pray for the students as they consider creative ways to engage their peers in conversations about the gospel this Holy Week.

February marked the third anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. The war continues to weigh heavily on those who have made their home in Brno. The current political situation, particularly the ongoing negotiations between

national leaders and the uncertainty surrounding future international support, has added an extra layer of intensity to already fragile emotions. Many of those we walk alongside live with a constant sense of worry, not knowing how shifting global priorities will affect them or their families back home.

In January, the United States announced a withdrawal of key humanitarian aid, significantly impacting organisations that support refugees across Europe, including Vesna. This has created real difficulties, as much of this funding was used to provide psychological counselling, legal advice and language courses – essential services helping Ukrainians integrate and rebuild their lives. Without this support, many have found it harder to access the help they need, and the uncertainty about the future has been deeply unsettling.

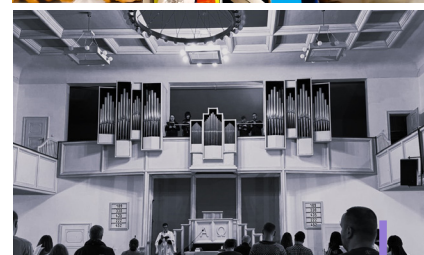
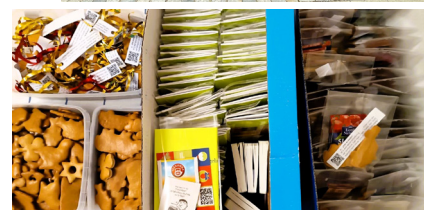
However, it has been wonderful to see how people here in the Czech Republic have stepped up. Individuals and local businesses have generously contributed to try and plug the gap, allowing some programmes to continue, at least for now.

As a church, we are learning the value of simply walking alongside people, week after week – praying together, investing in one another and growing as a community of faith. Some of the people we meet are just beginning to ask questions about faith, others have been following Jesus for some time, but together we are learning what it means to live as God's people in this place. For example, one young artist who recently moved to Brno describes himself as coming from a non-religious background but began exploring faith after reading the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. He has since immersed himself in theology and philosophy, and after much reflection, he is preparing for baptism on Easter Sunday. Please pray for him as he continues his journey, that he would grow in understanding and faith, and that he would be encouraged by our community as he takes this significant step. There's no quick formula for discipleship. Like a seed growing, it happens in God's time, often unnoticed. Yet over months and years, we are seeing how lives are transformed.

Speaking of small but meaningful things, we also had a reason to celebrate recently – Ted's birthday! He turned 12 (and is not so small), which we can't quite believe – where do the years go? – and we marked the occasion with cake and a trip to see a superhero film.

Jesus modelled how meaningful moments often grow from the seemingly ordinary – pausing, noticing, and making space for people. Your prayers, encouragement and support allow this ministry to continue, sustaining and equipping us to remain present and engaged in Brno. Thank you for walking this road with us.

With gratitude, Lea & Petra



*Photos from top to bottom: Petra speaking about Vesna's work; Momentum: a residential weekend equipping university students to live and share their faith on campus; gingerbread ready for distribution; our Anglican congregation, usually hosted by the Hussites, worshipping in the distinctive Blahoslavův dům (Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, ECCB) this time.*



## Bringing hope where people have given up on God and church

**We've been encouraged** to hear stories from others who are part of our wider area of work. In Honduras, Carlos had a change of heart working with a Christian ministry, and in the UK Garry Ion reports on how Carlisle's Community Shed is sharing skills, community and Jesus. Read more at [churchmissionsociety.org/bringinghope](https://churchmissionsociety.org/bringinghope)