



Lea and Petra Williams

Link Letter no. 6 | November 2023

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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.

In our current cultural crisis, the most powerful demonstration of the reality of the gospel is a community embodying the way, the truth, and the life of Jesus. Healthy community is the life of Jesus living in us and through us. (Gibbs and Bolger, 2005).

Dear friends,

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. In recent weeks we have been blessed in many ways and there is much to be thankful for.

We write at the beginning of a new academic year thankful for the Anglican community that has formed here over the past 18 months. As we have worshipped, shared food, hospitality and our lives week by week, we've witnessed growing friendships and a deepening of community. A recent highlight was gathering for a barbecue at a local lake to mark the end of the summer holidays. It's quite a popular place near Brno to relax and swim, perhaps because we're in a landlocked country and getting to the beach takes a long drive. While some were still away from Brno it was still a fantastic time of fellowship and community building.

Please do pray for us as a community as we look forward to all that this new year will bring, for the new students and workers that will make the city their home and all that God will do among us and through us. In particular would you **please pray for a new study group which started this September at Masaryk University** and for the participants as they wrestle with their own deep theological and philosophical questions? Each Tuesday evening we explore questions raised by group members. For example, last week we were considering the question, "If God is all-good and all-powerful, why is there such evil and suffering in the world?"

John Stott once said that "evangelism and social action are like two wings of a bird. The church cannot fly except with both in action". As we seek to nurture faith, we also seek to reach out creatively with the compassion of God to others in the local community. For us, perhaps some of the most encouraging moments of the summer were when younger members of the church community gave up a week and worked together to transform several classrooms at Vesna (the centre working with people in need). These classrooms are already being put to good use. It was hard and hot work, but it was great fun too. These kinds of activities are often like a greenhouse for friendships, and this certainly was, and also gave us an opportunity to live out faith in the service of others. So, we look forward to many more regular opportunities to serve our neighbours.



Barbecue at Brno Přehrada

Support Lea and Petra Williams:
churchmissionsociety.org/williams

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



Petra continues to give much of her time supporting the work of Vesna. In the summer she assisted with a project called School Days, an initiative to help equip school children from families in need for the new school year. Here in the Czech Republic each child must provide their own materials (workbooks, stationery, slippers, briefcase, etc.) and this can often be a burden for already stretched families. Several businesses donated and we, through a collection taken at our Christmas service, were able to contribute items of stationery too. Over 100 families received items, some of whom had several children.

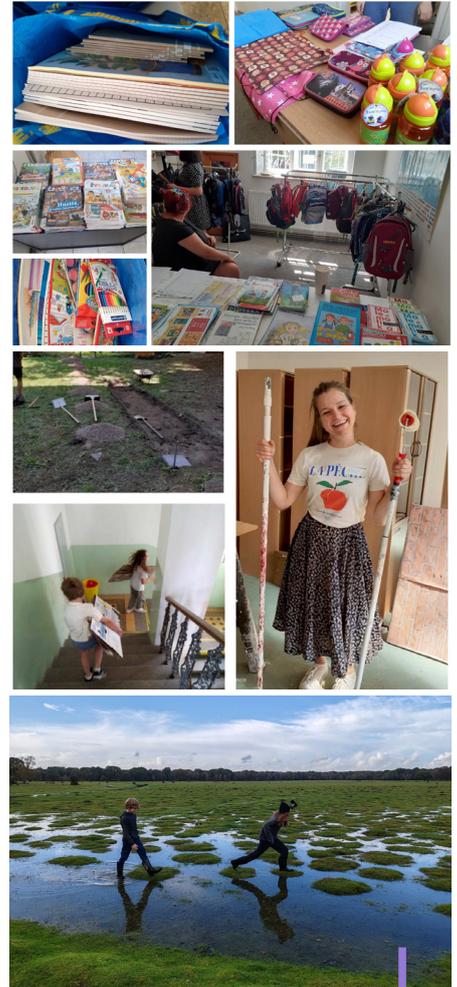
In addition to working at Vesna's wardrobe project (Šatník), which provides practical help for those in need, Petra is also supporting and recruiting volunteers for the project. Since the conflict in Ukraine began, Vesna has grown at quite a pace to become one of the largest humanitarian charities in the country offering practical help (clothing, prams, household goods), emotional support, emergency accommodation, and educational programmes. In this time a large and dedicated team has developed, many of whose members are Ukrainians who have appreciated the project and now want to join the team supporting others. However, due to the speed and scale of growth new volunteers are always required to meet the need. **Please pray for existing staff and volunteers, giving thanks for their dedication and for strength for the coming winter period.**

You might remember that in our last link letter we mentioned our car breaking down. Given the extent and complexity of the work we anticipated that the cost would be quite substantial. Well, we're pleased to say that (after 160 days!) the garage finally sourced the parts needed and repaired the car. We are also thankful for the Lord's provision through his people. Due to a surprise gift at the end of July we were able to cover the cost of the work — praise God! It's such an answer to prayer and means that the many additional hours per week we were spending on public transport can now be used in other ways!

We are writing this letter from the UK as our two-week visit to link churches ends. It has been such a joy to visit, share and worship with churches in Essex, Shropshire and Hampshire. Thank you for your partnership and to those who have made us feel so welcome. We look forward to returning next year to visit the link churches we're still to visit for the first time.

With our prayers as we enter the season of Advent, may we be ready for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lea and Petra



Photos from top to bottom: Masaryk University in Brno; supplies ready for School Days; working hard preparing classrooms ready for September; Olivia and Ted enjoying a "walk" while visiting one of our link churches.



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