

WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO MEET OUR MISSION PARTNERS LEA AND PETRA

CHURCH
MISSION
SOCIETY

The call in action

Dear friends,

Thirty years after the Velvet Revolution ended Soviet rule in the Czech Republic, it is now the most secular country in Eastern Europe according to a 2017 Pew Research survey.

The harsh realities of the Soviet era continue to cast a shadow. While attitudes towards the church were previously ambiguous, imposed atheism and the persecution of believers (from brutal force to subtle harassment) have left the community of faith scarred and society deeply sceptical.

Yet there is growing interest in the spiritual. Evangelical and charismatic congregations, along with new worshipping communities, are connecting with those exploring faith and seeing small yet consistent growth. We seek to join in with what God has started in one such community, a small Anglican congregation in the city of Brno, to see a vibrant Christian community develop.

Planted in 2011 following requests for worship, the congregation meets for monthly evening services. We dream of seeing this become a Christian community (of both Czechs and internationals) committed to the practice of missional hospitality, blessing the city and connecting with the significant student population. We want to encounter God through exploring the Bible, breaking bread together and developing a church community where everyone can play their part in the mission of God.

Brno, a former industrial centre and the Czech Republic's second largest and fastest growing city after Prague, has reimaged itself as a centre for technology, engineering and research. It is a young city, home to six public universities and 80,000 students. We know the city from Petra's family connections and time studying there.

Petra, a Czech, moved to Glasgow in 2005, encountered Jesus and became involved in church life. As she grew in her faith, her pastor encouraged Petra to explore theological studies. Lea, from Shropshire, came to faith as a child and was shaped by his parents' example of sharing faith and nurturing new believers. At a young age he felt called to ordination, enthusiastically telling his teacher, "One day, miss, I will be a vicar."

We met at International Christian College, where there was a strong emphasis on mission and global Christianity. We married in 2009 and have two children, Olivia and Theodore. After working with children and families at a church in Essex, Lea was ordained in 2016. Lea completed his curacy in north Essex and Petra works as a photographer. Lea has spent time with Anglican chaplaincies in Prague, Moscow and Brussels, and learned the Czech language. We have been discerning a call to long-term ministry in the Czech Republic for a number of years.

Blessings, Lea and Petra



Name: Lea and Petra Williams

Location: Brno, Czech Republic

Our call: To create Christian community committed to missional hospitality, where all are welcome and play a part in God's mission

Our role: To lead the Anglican congregation in Brno and develop a vibrant Christian community where people explore faith, meet Jesus and grow as disciples

WHY SUPPORT OUR MISSION PARTNERS LEA AND PETRA WILLIAMS?

Find out on the next page

churchmissionsociety.org/williams

WHY SUPPORT LEA AND PETRA?

Lea and Petra have a passion to minister in the lively and developing city of Brno to both the growing English-speaking community and to Czechs who are now among the most unchurched in Europe.

Pew research published in 2017 found that 72 per cent of Czechs do not identify with a religious group, and only 29 per cent believe in God. This makes the Czech Republic an outlier in terms of religious belief in Eastern Europe.

Lea and Petra will lead the small Anglican congregation in Brno, which developed out of requests for worship for the English-speaking community. They see opportunities for both Czech and international seekers to explore faith and the person of Jesus, to worship and to play their part in the mission of God, for his glory and Brno's good. They do so at a time of social and political challenge. In 2019, 250,000 people marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution as mass demonstrations

returned to the streets of Prague. While all the economic indicators suggest that the country is thriving, the transition from state socialism to capitalism has brought the systemic problems of corruption, levels of personal debt, homelessness, alcohol abuse and the challenge of integrating minority groups.

Lea and Petra, with a sense of calling to the Czech Republic, familiarity with the city and Czech language skills, are ideally placed to meet that need. They have a vision for a church community engaging with the Bible, growing in discipleship, practising hospitality, creating opportunities for people to explore faith and seeking God's best for their city through social action.

At CMS, we are excited to partner with Lea and Petra in their calling to make disciples in Brno, and we invite you to join with us.



CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY THE BIGGER PICTURE

One of Church Mission Society's greatest strengths is our people. We believe all of God's people are called to God's mission. Some are called to be a faithful witness to Jesus where they are and some, like Lea and Petra, are called to share Jesus' love in word and deed overseas.

Since our founding in 1799, we have partnered with more than 10,000 men and women from all walks of life who felt God lead them to cross geographical and cultural boundaries to put their call into action. We've seen God work through them to bring about transformation in individual lives, communities and creation. It's not because these people – mission partners as we call them – are heroes. As many will tell you, they are ordinary

people playing a part in the extraordinary story of God's mission.

Today, CMS people in mission work in a variety of ways in 40+ countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe. All our mission partners commit to working alongside local people, listening, learning, building relationships and becoming a genuine part of the communities where they are living.

We believe investing in faithful people is a proven, effective way to join in God's mission and bring about change in our world. That's why we are asking you to invest in Lea and Petra through prayer and giving – so we can be part of this unfolding story together.

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To put your call into action
churchmissionsociety.org

