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2019-XX. ročník



Dear Czech - American family!

The fourth (!!)



English Camp is coming up quickly, and we might have different expectations. Some of us (especially the newcomers from both sides) may not know what to expect at all; some others (the Czechs 😊) may hesitate about their up-to-date levels of English and need to be encouraged to sign up for the Camp to experience the strength of our friendship. Most of us, will, as usual, experience this event as a feast of our partnership. For everybody (including those who are involved in our partnership, but for various reasons cannot enrich our summer community by their presence) we have prepared this English version of our church newsletter Posel (Messenger). I was so impressed and touched by the number of contributors! And then I was so moved to read your posts... In this issue we all can read how powerful and

colorful God's love is. We can be fascinated by the diversity of its manifestations in our lives, minds, souls. Perhaps we Czechs are a bit ashamed of not initially believing in „partnership over the ocean“. I remember Becky's question at the very first English Camp if I was ready to visit Athens. I didn't think it could ever be possible. But - as in many other life situations - our decisions reflect our priorities. And we, members of

ECCB in Olomouc and members of Covenant, have recognized that building our partnership is one of our personal as well as shared priority.

I wish all of us joy from reading this issue of Posel, and we look forward to meeting face to face!



Jana Vrajová

P. S. My American sister, I miss you so much!!

The briefest history of the Partnership

Exploration – Waiting – Hesitating – Deciding – Working
– Going – Working – Coming – Leaving – Remembering –
Returning –



Now, a brief history of the First English camp in terms of e-mails.

We didn't want to be slaves of technology, but technology really helped.

First, there was **Laurie**, she was behind the project and in fact started it all.

We exchanged a number of e-mails – they were **full of enthusiasm, passion, full of ideas**. You knew Laurie, didn't you. Unfortunately, Laurie fell ill.

Then **Ginger** took over. The exchange of e-mails went on. This time in a **matter-of-facted way**.

You know us – teachers. Unfortunately, Ginger injured her shoulder at the Paris airport and couldn't come either.

So **Sue** took over. This time our e-mails were titled: **“Some questions”, “Some more questions”, “Another question”, “One more question”,** etc. and I had to look around for answers. Besides, we both expressed our fears and worries and spoke about how nervous and inexperienced we were in organizing a course.

Was it necessary? No, it wasn't. We were overwhelmed by how wonderfully, carefully and conscientiously our American teachers prepared everything, including the textbooks, music, conversation topics, etc. And, of course, we too sighed with relief that everything went as it should at our end... So thank you, thank you...

In the end, there is always an assessment, evaluation of the course. Usually there are lots of words. But we needed only two. Wherever we turned you could hear “next year”, “next time”, next, next.. and all that from both the Americans and the Czechs. **Do you want to come? Yes, we do. Do we want them to come? Yes, we do.**

(I. M. – after the first EC 2013)

*

What followed were not only three more English camps, but **deeper understanding** between individual members of our congregations, wider knowledge of the parts of the world we live in, closer insight in the history of our countries and the way it influenced our worldviews and our present lives.

Beside the camps – How do people get to know one another deeper?

We think that in our case it was also:

Through **visits to the Covenant** with issuing excitement over the enormous scope of social activities you offer to those in need – be it Meals on Wheels, Council on Ageing, Covenant Connection Interfaith Week, The Cave, etc.

Through **Mark's sermons**, through his theology, we could see your standpoint in wider issues exceeding the borders of the congregations, and its social implications.

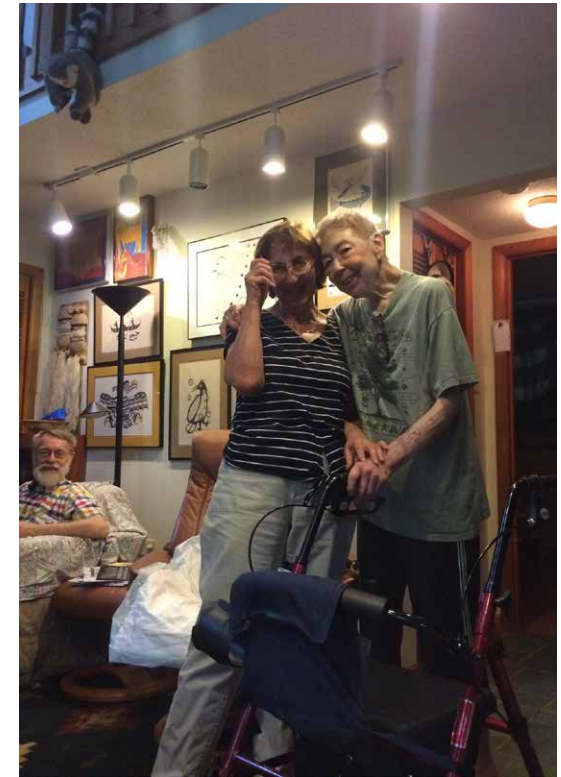
Of course, not only that, but also through **individual talks, e-mails and assessment sessions**. We could discover the sameness of human fundamental problems, but also certain differences due to different histories of our two nations and churches. – Now, not to be only serious, through laughing together, telling funny stories, and joking.

And – Dear me! Last but not least – **through your FB likes and hates and shares** – they are so telling, and, of course, we can't avoid being modern.

Iva Marková

Sue Rathbun (From the start of this journey)

From the start of this journey I did not know what to expect. All the preparation, all the meetings, and all the hurdles that we had to get through to get to the Czech Republic seemed overwhelming at times. But all fell away once we set foot in this beautiful country and especially when we stepped off the train in Olomouc to be embraced by such wonderful, loving and engaging people. Being a part of this English Conversation Camp was such a moving and spiritual experience that I truly felt the presence of God. I will be forever changed by the E.C.C.B Olomouc congregation. Thank you for letting me share in your life. We are also truly grateful to Laurie Anderson for encouraging and inspiring all of us every day. Without Laurie we would have never taken this journey.



Sue Rathbun



Jana and Sue

*Saying goodbye to Laurie,
4 days before ...*

The Nativity



I shall never forget the day I was called to the church office. A package had arrived from Olomouc, Czech Republic. I could not believe my eyes when it was opened and I saw what was inside. My eyes filled with tears and my heart burst with love. I knew at that very moment that this would not just be a church partnership. I knew we would be forever a family.

Sue Rathbun



One Lord, One Faith

Years ago, when the Board of Elders was considering joining the ECCB - PCUSA partnership, I thought (perhaps not only me) it might be – due to the distance – rather demanding. What will the new cooperation look like? Will it be based on occasional contacts or visits of individuals only?

But, what I didn't expect was how creative and serious our American friends from Athens will be about the Partnership. The first English Camp in 2013 was a real breakthrough in our contacts. I still admire the courage, energy, inspiration, and commitment of the big group repeatedly devoting their time to modelling new and newer layouts of the courses. Love with which they serve our Lord radiates from their faces and makes the language barriers tumble down and “the speech of the Heart” prevail. This is what I have always felt during our English camps. Not only despite the different languages and a wide range of ages – from little kids to the elderly –we, all together, could praise the Lord with the morning and evening prayers and songs led expertly by Sister Linda.

Both the morning and afternoon classes were offered carefully prepared age-and-English skills related programs, talks on given topics, songs, arts and craft activities. All that with unusual inventiveness of our teachers. There was always enough room for fun and wide opportunities for closer relationships, openness and mutual trust. All that was even more intensive during dinner times or on weekend trips. The Friday afternoon “Olomouc coffee house” with a diversity of Czech and English “anything goes”,



Jana Hojová and Sue Rathbun

topped with rich and delicious banquet, has become an unforgettable experience.

Though slightly shadowed by sadness of parting, the farewell Sunday service was full of gratefulness to God for everything we could receive. We said goodbyes, enriched by new friendships, new experience and hopefully with enhanced English skills, and, last but not least, encouraged not to give up our studies.

Despite the age-related failing memory and language acquisition capacity, I am looking forward to this year's English camp very much. I am sure that this will again be expressed in the lyrics of one of our songs: One Lord, one faith, one baptism unite us. We are one body, we hear the voice of Christ: That they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, let them all be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Jana Hojová

Mark's reflection

When I was growing up in the 1960s and 70s, I spent a lot of time with friends playing Cowboys and Indians in the public park that was at the center of our neighborhood in Raleigh, NC. Our historically inaccurate imaginations of what those two groups of „adversaries“ were like were largely shaped by the Western movies we saw on television. When I was a little older I found an 8,000 year-old spear point in the creek bed of that same park, a startling reminder that real Native Americans had once lived where we played.

Two summers ago I took that spear point and some other Native American artifacts to Olomouc for English camp – only to hear from many of you that similar evidence of our early ancestors had been found in Czech fields and creek beds. Even more surprising was discovering that fictionalized versions of Native American life had been informing



your imaginations, too. While I had never read Karl May's series of books about Winnetou, or seen any of the movies, Iva and others quickly let me know that Hollywood didn't have a complete claim on telling us what the „Wild West“ was really like! As different as our histories are, there seem to be so many places where our influences are the same.

Mark Harper



Our trip to the USA

That day was amazing. 25. March 2019. The day of our departure to the „New World“. Me and my wife Dagmar were nervous. Such a long, exhausting journey! Did we not forget any important formality? When we were young, say, in the communist eighties, something like that was absurd just to think about...

We heard about life in U.S. either from the régime propaganda, or from the broadcasting of the Voice of America. The number of people who visited this country was very limited.

We had a flight via Stockholm. Surprisingly there we were asked by American immigrant officers. Where are you going? Why? When was your wife born? I was so shocked that I almost forgot it! Fortunately we succeeded to pass this examination. Yes, we expected it, but later, at JFK...

New York. We waited for the passport control more than two hours. And after that, we took the journey by the subway to Manhattan. Old, ancient subway, where probably nothing had changed for many decades. Despite many horror stories we had heard, we felt safe there even at night. Even the big rat, running among the rails somewhere nearby Penn Station, looked friendly...

We enjoyed four days the N.Y.C. We visited places we knew just from the films. Look, this must be the place, where the famous concert of Simon and Garfunkel was held in Central Park! And this is undoubtedly the place of the famous scene from „Hair“ by Miloš Forman! Central Park ... where you can't wander after dark ...

But we saw more than that. The Guggenheim Gallery, Broadway, Times Square,

Chinatown, Brooklyn Bridge, and the Ground Zero. We climbed up the Empire State Building and passed by the Statue of Liberty on the ferry to Staten Island.

Saturday 30. March. Departure for Atlanta. First visit to Athens. Many ardent words, many welcomes and greetings. The great hospitality of Mr. And Mrs. Bowden.

The partnership conference started on the 1st of April in Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, nearby Atlanta. The topic was „Hoping Together“. We exchanged many experiences with our American partners concerning many topics. Migration, global warming and many other problems are threatening people in both our societies and nations at the present time. But as Christians we can never lose hope. „There are matters, having deep sense, regardless how they turn out.“ That is hope according to Václav Havel, that is hope as the true Christian value.

After the conference, we returned back to Athens, together with Aleš Wrana, the pastor of the Evangelical Music Academy in Olomouc. Our friends organized a rich and interesting program for us. Many visits and meetings. We also experienced how the service of Meals on Wheels worked. We were guests in the house of Tamara and Ton Stam for more than a week. Their hospitality was really great. „You need not to stay just in your rooms, just move anywhere in our house“. If hungry, just take what you please ...

On 10th April Aleš returned back home. But we still made a trip with Tamara and Ton. The destination – Montreat, N.C. A lovely place in the mountains. The Bowdens kind-

ly offered us to stay in their „Bowdenvilla“. Dear Jim and Gere – thank you very much. Your generosity was great.

Driving back to Athens we made the last stop in Smoky Mountains. The good opportunity to visit the Cherokee museum and to think about their tragic fate.

And after all – the journey back home on April 15. Flight via Chicago and London.

Really exhausting. But full of beautiful experiences and memories of our friends ... as well as many meetings, dialogues, and of course funny days, barbecues, beers .. etc.

Thanks to God and to you all, brothers and sisters on the opposite Atlantic shore! And see You soon !

Jan Lukáš, Olomouc



Hello to our friends

Hello to our friends in Olomouc! We have so many fond memories of when Vera and Jana and Ivana and Barbora visited us in Athens. We quilted together, went geocaching, and had a picnic at Watson’s Mill. Then in 2015, Phil and I had the honor of visiting you in your homes. Ivana was our gracious hostess, Eva and Jan gave us a walking tour of your city, and Vera and Ladislav hosted us for a dinner with their friends. And of course we got to meet many of your church members. The partnership between your church and Covenant has a very special place in our hearts.

Linda Koehler



**English Camp 2017 “Around the U.S. in 5 Days”
My memories**

All that has been an unforgettable experience for me: Prayers, songs, English, coffee, tea, sweets, but on top of that all – nice, open, wonderful people.

We sang, made paper flowers and dream catchers, studied Eng-

lish, all that enabling us to better understand some U.S. States, their lifestyles, their history.

However, there was enough room for our history as well. It was filled with our life stories dating back to the time of communism. By listening to them, I felt enriched not only as a human being but also as a sociologist. It's true – sociology deals mainly with the contemporary society, but, I do believe that there is no understanding of contemporary society without looking into its history. After the WWII, the Czech society saw several radical political changes – in the years 1948, 1968, and 1989. For decades, we lived in socialism, the regime that destroyed human lives, but, paradoxically, it enabled some to activate their inner strength, resolution, and courage. I listened to those stories told by my new friends in the English Camp with unceasing interest. And so did, I believe, our American friends as well.



In my opinion, society is made up of people, endowed with motivations, aspirations, ambitions, faiths, and values which determine the way they act in various situations, under various circumstances. That's why when starting research into the society, I always look first at individuals, because it is only people's actions and their faiths that society is made up of. This also determines the choice of my main research method: the interview. Analyzing the interviews helps me understand the past of men and women stored in their memories, and, based on that, identify their present plans and hopes. Naturally, listening to the talks during our classes was therefore a very precious experience for me.

Let me thank you all for allowing me to become part of your community, thank you for your friendship, love, openness, and trust. I am happy to have been here with you.

Helena Kubátová

Pam Knox reflection

As much as I loved visiting Olomouc and helping with the English camp a few years ago, my favorite interactions with friends from Olomouc are through their contributions to our Advent devotional. Every year we enjoy reading short stories or essays about Advent that bring new insight to our featured theme. At the same time, it gives us a new appreciation for our partners in the Czech Republic and helps our friendship grow even deeper. I look forward to continuing the relationship for many years, and thanks to all of you for your participation in our Advent through the devotional.

Pam Knox



A really warm memory

For me partnership is connected with people. With personal relationship. Until the first English Camp it was only a word. Yes, some people visited us. Some people were in Athens and it was very interesting to hear how people live there. But still it was not personal. I never dreamed of going to the US. In fact I did not want to fly ever. The first English Camp changed it all. Next summer I flew to Athens.

I met many nice people there. Visiting knitters and knotters had special meaning for me. I like the idea to meet and work together on something that is useful for others.

And later we went with Linda to bring two blankets to Cancer center. But the most important thing is that I was given one of the blankets. No possibility to pack it into my luggage. But no problem. A few days after my coming back, Czech mail delivered me a box. When I unpacked it, I found blanket. Nice soft and warm. I immediately fell in love. And even if I do not

remember all the names and faces, the blanket reminds me my staying in Athens and all the people I met there. Thank you for everything.

Věra Schnaubelová



Věra, Becky, Steve

I have truly been blessed

I have truly been blessed to be able to participate in all three English Conversation Camps. Each camp experience has been similar (full of activity and laughter, lots of smiles, connecting with Olomouc church members) yet unique (different Covenant participants, different class topics, new camp participants). One of the things I noticed this year was that this experience changed from being an English Conversation Camp to a true Conversation Camp. A different approach was taken with the beginning adult class, many of whom grew up during the

Communist era when speaking English was forbidden. This year some who had never participated in the camp before came to tell their stories in Czech which were then translated into English. What a privilege it was to converse with the beginning adult class in this way! By my calculations, 21 different people from Covenant have taken part in the Conversation Camps. We as a congregation are truly growing closer to our sister church in Olomouc! May God be praised!!

Linda Rogers



Linda, Jana, Sue, Ginger

Rebecca's reflection from 2017

The Czech Republic and our partnership church hold a special place in my heart. I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in this relationship. The people that I have met go out of their way to make us feel welcome, to share their talents and to lighten our workload. They play a central and active role helping our partnership blossom. I had not realized what this relationship means to Christians in a predominantly non-Christian state. My friends explained to me that while they are in the minority in their country, having a personal relationship with the larger world church gives each of them a sense of the power of God's love for them. The relationship offers a sense of belonging,

and helps validate their faith. I was touched by the progress of the beginning adults and children as they communicated with us. The intermediate and advanced adults are able to share discussions about mutual concerns, ideas and blessings. I am excited that we have two representatives from the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren who will come this summer to visit Covenant. I encourage you to participate and to take time to meet and to join with these youth as they explore the spectrum of God's love. I know that their zest for life, their faith and their desire to better understand the world will make a lasting impression on us all.

Rebecca Silver



English camp 2015

We expected them with curiosity. We wondered what they would be like. Our American teachers, you know.

We found out soon: They were wonderful, smiling, helpful people, with certainty of God's proximity, and bringing to us their tenets of faith, hope and love.

My English level was ZERO. My husband's – both writing and speaking - ADVANCED. This caused problems in our group – he was joking, disturbing our discipline with too many remarks or jokes.

Unlike him, we “zeros” worked really hard. Though we didn't understand a whit, our perfect interpreter Ivanka, enabled us to put two and two together,

Each class was different. One day the teaching aids were pots and pans and other kitchen utensils. How many suitcases did they have to have? And how big did they have to be? Then we realized the pots and pans normally sat in our church kitchenette.

In-between we prayed and sang and were getting to know each other.

Next class: The human body. Teaching method: a famous children's rhymes: head and shoulders, knees and ankles...and touching the right body parts.

Of course, the most romantic and exciting teaching objective was this: taken outside to the river bank, we were told to draw and verbally describe the ecosystem of the river Morava.

Some pictures were very well-done. And they were not the same. We were placed at certain distances, so that the “pieces of art” differed accordingly. Each of us saw something else...

And the description? Sue Harper was an excellent teacher. We ended up with sentences like “This tree belongs to the ecosystem of the river Morava, because....”

Believe me or not that was the longest English sentence of my life.

All that were memorable moments. We enjoy our memories. While writing this, my soul is sad, because there's nobody peeping over my shoulder giving me a piece of advice. My beloved husband was called to the Throne of the Highest in September 2017. I thank you also in his name. You have our respect and gratefulness.

Marta Palatý



Eva Holasová, Marta Palatý, Růženka Vrajová, Ginger Davis-Beck

From my trip Journal...

From my trip journal, entry dated 7/21/15: „Both scriptures Sunday were about the miracles of feeding the masses. She drew many parallels between those miracles and the partnership between our churches: God’s abundance, the compassion and generosity of people involved, the inclusion of people regardless of age, life situation, abilities, and the experience of the Holy through the relationships and bonds forged among us. I think we all experienced something holy during this trip, and the sermon perfectly captured the spirit of the trip and the larger partnership.“

Joan Prittie

in Olomouc 2015

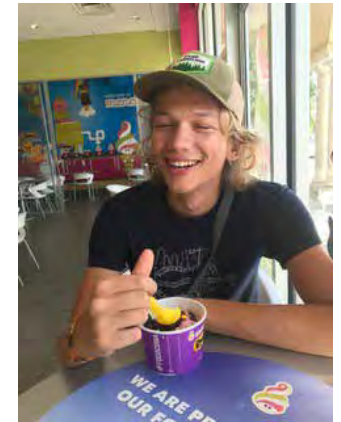


in Athens 2018

Warning: can include irony ;)

I usually do not remember much past events, but what I do recall from the English camp taking place in Olomouc in summer 2015 and my visit in Athens in summer 2017 (I hope I get the dates right) is especially the mutual hospitality and understanding. I think that the partnership has brought both sides a lot of unforgettable memories – for me personally explaining like every second word in Czech to Jim, visiting almost every village near Athens, every site in Atlanta, getting a bunch of T-shirts and I could go on... And despite the fact that the Americans came to the Czech Republic to teach us English, each of us have learned something. They’ve also learned a lot about the unknown small country in Central Europe (not Eastern!). Although I have to say that these Americans weren’t ignorant, they expressed a great interest in various typical features of Czech culture, our history, our food and drinks, above all our alcohol. But I still think there is something more that connects us together – maybe it’s our faith, or maybe just that every year there is someone visiting the other one, who knows? Anyway, I am looking forward to meeting you again. Why not?

Honza Dostál



I was part of the group

I was part of the group from Covenant who traveled to the Czech Republic in July, 2015.

When our train pulled in to Olomouc, there were crowds of people waiting near the track. My first thought was that we needed to hurry off the train to let all those people on before the train started again for its next stop. Then I realized that it was half the congregation from our sister church there to greet us! There were many hugs and intro-

ductions while they retrieved our bags from the train, took us to their homes for lunch and quickly made us feel loved, appreciated and a part of their fellowship. That same caring and enthusiasm for the English Camp and for us continued through the week. I fondly remember my week there, and know that I could go there today and feel that same love and acceptance.

Ginger Davis-Beck

Easy and Fast

With excitement we expected our first meeting with our American friends who were supposed to teach us English. They were perfectly prepared. Books full of exercises, songs, maps and a lot of other things

After a warm welcome and a song, things got under way. Our language skills and abilities helped the teachers divide us into groups. There were quite some of us who knew nothing. But they spoke English to us, too. I understood they were asking about my name. I said: ROUS. Judging by their face expression, I thought they must be surprised by what strange names were used here in this country. One of our advanced students evaluated my language performance: "You have courage, Auntie, really!" This courage, however, did not last long. I came to see that it's rather by my heart than by my reason that I can make myself understood.

Ivanka Marková helped us a lot in this respect. She took care of our group. We met in the "vikárka" (vicar's room), unseen, unheard by anybody, but we enjoyed our talks. Ivanka interpreted for us, making it "snadno a rychle" (easy and fast). The Americans were told by us about what we went through under communism in this country, in our families and in the church. We told them what our faith meant to us at that time and how we managed to pass it down onto younger generations.

The relaxed atmosphere and friendship were not compounded by the inability to express ourselves. We felt how the language barrier was torn down by faith.

Rose (Vrajová)



Olomouc memories

My fondest memories in Olomouc revolve our host families, and fine Czech dinners each evening. Getting to know the people of your church through engaging conversation over meals and drinks during evenings. Learning about Czech culture while sharing goulash, dumplings and lots of wonderful gravy. Lively conversation over beers, wine and your most potent of drinks, slivovica. If I have to pick out one particular memory, it was during the English camp of four years ago. Towards the end of the English camp, about 20 of us had gathered around tables

arranged in a rectangle, and I asked you to describe your favorite destinations. Many of you spoke of the beautiful mountains in the countryside surrounding Olomouc, or vacation trips to the splendid coast of Croatia. The funniest respond came from one the teens, who said it was his bed. The next teen had to agree. When I was asked, I had to say that my favorite destination has been the Czech Republic and Olomouc. I look forward to seeing all of you again this summer.

Steve Rathbun

For the fourth time in Olomouc

For the fourth time I returned to Olomouc and every time, I find that my connection to the people there grows as the children grow taller. I agree with Ivana Markova, that this year's English camp was a camp of deeper communication and now a deeper connection between our two churches. Our American group jumped right into the week wearing their train hats, blowing train whistles and giving the children tickets to get on board our imaginary train/boat, as we traveled each day across the US from New York to Alaska. There was an abundance of laughter, so many great stories and songs, so many hugs and kisses, so much hospitality, and most of all love shared between old

friends and new. I have found that I am part of a much extended family. I have a Czech mother who gives me her much loved jars of gulas to take home, a father who proudly shows me his family tree and much loved books about American Indians, a brother who is so thoughtful and caring and such a wonderful father to his children and most of all a sister who makes me laugh so much it brings me to tears and her children who are so beautiful and amazingly gifted. I know I will always be a part of them and they will always be a part of me. Gods love shines brightly through the wonderful people of Olomouc.

Sue Rathbun

What am I looking forward to?

I was looking at the photos from the English camp four years ago.

I remembered our trip to Praděd, the highest hill of Moravia. We returned completely wet. Joan had to get dry her travel book by hairdryer, and her boots were still wet even at home in Athens. But Joan said: "Imagine, our experience is good enough for an action movie."

I also remembered the nice time during eating together, coffee house with

a lot of fun but also a little bit sadness (because of the end).

I am looking forward to experiencing new adventures with old friends.

Adéla Gabrielová



English camp

I'm looking forward to the second week of July not only because all of my exams will be finally over (hurray!) but also because that's when our English camp takes place. And what is so special about this event? Although both learning English and playing games is great and fun, for me it's not the most important aspect. For me it's about the people. English camp is a great opportunity to make new friends as well as spend some time with the old ones! The photo reminds me of the amazing memories I have from the last camp and I can't wait to add some new ones!

Sára Gabrielová



Terry's reflection

Six months after moving 1600 kilometers to Lincoln, Nebraska, I have become comfortable with my new job and am becoming connected with my new community. As I approached this major life change, I was strengthened by my memories of the welcoming love I experienced two summers ago when I visited Olomouc. "For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home" (Matthew 25:35). I thank the many members of your congregation who helped make my time at summer camp so meaningful. Our spiritual connections and journey during my visit to Olomouc helped prepare me for adjusting to my new home in Lincoln.

Terry Centner



Terry Centner, Markéta and Dan Markovi

Josh Ballard-Myer (Our trip to Olomouc)

Our trip to Olomouc, made possible by this church, was a very memorable experience for me. Whether it is the memories I made or the friends I made, I am so glad that I got the experience. Hopefully my family can return the favor and host a group in the future.

Josh Ballard-Myer

Our partnership

The congregation to congregation partnership between the ECCB and PCUSA churches was started several years before we had the first English camp here in Olomouc. Laurie Anderson and Helen Epps were the first to come to Olomouc to see and explore the possibilities of future development of the partnership. At the Synodal Council, Dr. Karen Moritz from the PCUSA was responsible for helping the partnership. She came over to Olomouc to preach and talk about our activities.



Courses of English followed every two years. For the first English camp the program was prepared very carefully by our American friends. They didn't know us at that time, they didn't know if we knew English, if we were young or old, if we had any children in the church... But they prepared the courses with great care, every time on different topics. This year they will come with new ideas for the fourth time.

We always offer not only family accommodation and food, but also a program of tours so that our guests can get to know not only our people and the church, but also beautiful places of the Olomouc region. So together we made a trip to the Bouzov Castle or to the

castle and garden in Kromeriz, There was also time for a campfire evenings at the Marek's.

During the classes we talk about life in our country and in Athens, about the life of the churches and our families.

Our guests have not always been in the same lineup but we are happy with everyone. The preacher at Athens Mark Harper with his son, Rebecca, Sue Rathbun, Steve, Linda Rogers, and others. We were sad to hear that Laurie Anderson couldn't come to teach, because she fell ill, and, eventually, God summoned her to Him. We miss her, we liked her.

Our partnership is not limited only to Olomouc English Camps. We like to visit the Athens church as well. Ivanka Markova, Barunka Nohavicova, Jana Vrajova, Věra Schnaubeltová, Honza Dostal, and others have already been to our sister church in Georgia and told us a lot about their visits.

This summer our friends from Athens are coming for the fourth time! We are looking forward to them!

Iva Jenišťová



English camp 2013

My recollection: Sitting in a circle, we were looking at a big bag lying in the middle on the floor. What are we to do with it? We find out soon: It's here to teach us two things at a time – to identify the kind of clothing we pull out of the bag and to say what color it is. I loved this lesson.

Zdena Ryšavá, a beginner

On the previous English Camp

On the previous English Camp of our congregation two years ago, I had many pleasant meetings with our brothers and sisters from Athens. The most joyful moment was a lunch with brother pastor Mark Harper. It was a great honor for me that he took time to come, although he was busy with the programme of the camp. We spent some great moments in the „Bistrá kráva“ café, talking about personal things and theology. That was before I began studying the Protestant Theological Faculty in Prague. Brother Mark encouraged me to study. I am glad I will be able to tell him that I am going on with my study and that I am getting ready to serve in the church. I hope that he finds time once again to come to a dinner to our new flat. The only thing to regret is that my beloved wife will not be in Olomouc then, as she is to take part in the youth camp of our church in Strmilov (southern Bohemia).

Alda Zapletal



Katy, Peřa Marek, Alda Zapletal

We are looking forward to our American friends

It's already been 2 years since they were here last time and they're coming back again in this summer. When we remember the previous encounters, we are again looking forward to interesting personalities, stories and situations.

We recall memories of past years.

We already had the opportunity to get to know closer 2 guests, who were accommodated in our house the last two camps.

The first experience was with Jim. From the very beginning we had no idea what to expect, to offer, but we were pleasantly surprised by his cordiality and huge interest in everything he bumped into - from construction materials and buildings types, through various sites and trips possibilities to the Czech language. Jim was so thoroughly involved in the partnership that he started learning Czech and took every opportunity

to learn new words. He was interested in the translation of all the signs that we met on our journey by car or on foot.

He was also keen to read the composition of the foods listed on their packaging.

Last English camp, Becky, like Jim, was curious, she surprised us by her interest in the details she captured by her camera. We remember especially our journeys to the church, when we and Becky were watching storks. We are pleased that she had the opportunity to take pictures for her children service in America.

It is always an encouragement for us to feel that even if we are spatially very far from each other, we find out in our interviews that we are close, we understand each other, despite the diversity of our languages. We share a common experience of faith.

Eva + Lad'a Palovi

I am thankful for the friendship

I left the Czech Republic with a love for the old world beauty of the cities we visited, but more importantly, I feel a special love and bond with the people we met. Learning English as a second language is vital to the growth and success of the people of the Czech Republic. I feel very blessed that I was able to help them, just a little bit, to accomplish this goal. I am thankful for the friendships made with the people of our partner church and for the companionship and deepening friendships I have made with the other Church members who accompanied me.

Shari Cobb

Going to Olomouc...

Going to Olomouc was a great experience. Learning about members of the congregation and making so many new friendships was amazing. I think that teaching them was as rewarding for us as it was for them.

Anna Cobb

A special bookmark

As we completed our week of English camp in Olomouc, various members of the congregation presented us tokens of their appreciation. One was a personalized bookmark. Mine summed up my week: “Life is measured ... by the moments that take our breath away.” My visit to Olomouc was one of those moments. What a powerful experience. The love, fellowship, and joy shared with my host family and our Czech congregants will remain with me the rest of my life. I am so thankful I was able to be a part of this ministry.

Terry Centner

There is so much to say about the trip to Olomouc

I am uncertain if there are enough words to describe the emotions, conversations, and laughs to accurately explain this trip, but I can try. In a society where political officials want to prove how “we” are different from “them,” this experience is one on a long list just how wrong they are. The people in Olomouc are just as us. They laugh and tell stories. The children play new and exciting games, even if they can’t speak to you. The elders tell stories of how we use to be; grand in their tales of life in communism. The teens are teens. They talk future, the tell jokes, go to movies, trade each other. This trip is explained as an intensive English conversation camp. There is a lot of work in English lessons and topics. There is a huge reward in working to help those there feel more comfortable with a new language. But, so much more comes from this trip. Breaking bread, eating, laughing, and loving. This trip proved that we are more alike than different and that we are all part of a loving community that transcends language, politics, and nations. We are the children of God.

Katy McGill



*Katy McGill
and Bemene
Piaro*

Other country, other manners

America and the Czech Republic are very far from one another. This is notoriously known. It follows that there may be some differences, sometimes amusing, in our manners and ways of life. We saw this from close by when offering dinner to one of our American friends. While waiting for the dinner to get ready, she chatted with our youngest son. To draw his attention, she was describing her extended family and their names. In America they give children names of famous actors.

Unlike this, Czech families are proud of having the names passed down from one generation to another. So it happened in our family. There are two Jans – Jan, the father, Jan, the son. There are pros and cons of such a tradition.

When Eva, the mom, wants to reprimand one of them, usually nobody answers. They both think it concerns the other Jan. If she wants to hand out something good or to praise one of them, both dash to her at once.

There is no such problem in America. When writing down the names of her extended family, our guest had to write everything down not to forget anybody. So the sheet of paper was completely covered with the names of famous American actors. When checking on the list, we haven’t found a single name written twice. That’s an advantage. When a name is called out, the right person comes. Our youngest son still keeps the sheet of paper as a souvenir.

Mistrust disappeared quickly

To make a better acquaintance with the way of life of more Czech families, the American guests are invited to dinners to other than host families. But not all Czech families have good English speakers to fluently converse. So it happens that the host tries to compensate the drawback of a meaningful conversation by serving carefully prepared delicious meals. We can’t blame a foreign guest for not



Bartuškovi, Becky, Iva

trusting home made food, especially when served in the “Eastern zone” of Europe. Her hesitation, however, didn’t last long. Before long, the guest realized that she was offered the best that we had and what we were capable of making. A proof? Not only did she praise the chef, but asked her for recipes for pancakes and bread pudding. We hope that also the husband of our dear guest will appreciate those dishes in remote Amerika.

Meeting in Bělkovice

When going back to Olomouc from Věra we had to make a stop to water the vegetables in our garden in Bělkovice. Linda, our guest, wanted to know why we had the garden just

there. The answer was easy – We inherited it from my grandfather. We are known for low standards of English. Eva wanted to say that my grandfather was a Mayer of the village for 20 years. She could only recollect the word “sheriff”. Linda must have imagined my grandfather as a law-enforcement officer – with pistols and a colt behind his belt... What a misunderstanding due to language deficiency. My grandpa was a respected citizen of the village – the Mayer, looking after villagers’ well being, a sheriff – an equally respected person, is a guard of people’s safety.

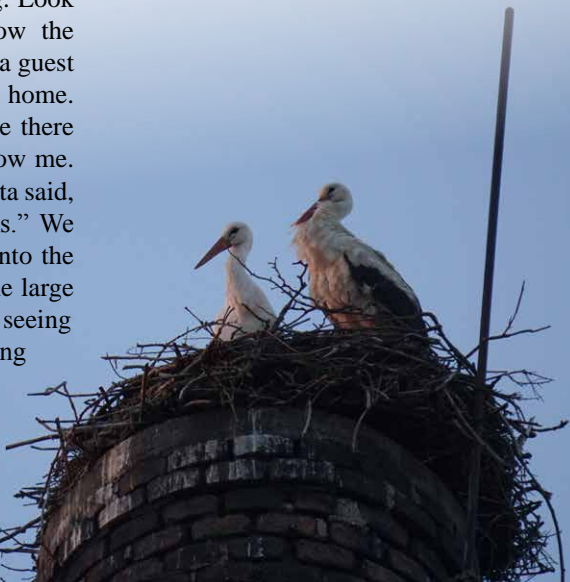
The Bartušeks

A Stork Story

I learned from an early age to love and appreciate God’s world around us. My mom would call out, “Come quick! Look the hummingbirds are back. Look there is a rainbow. Look at the deer grazing. Look and take time to enjoy.” Somehow the subject of storks came up as I was a guest at Vera and Lada Schnaubeltova’s home. They told me that they knew where there were stork nests and they could show me. It was almost night, but Lada and Vita said, “Come quick! We’ll find the storks.” We grabbed our cameras and jumped into the car and off we went in search of the large birds. It was so exciting to anticipate seeing my first Czech storks. I loved driving around in search of nests where the birds had come home for the evening. That night Vita took a most beautiful picture of the storks with the moon. Maybe my daughter Amanda will see

a stork on her short visit to Olomouc. I’ll say as my Mom would say, “Look quick! Look at the birds on the chimney.”

Rebecca Silver



Nina

*How I attended my first English camp in 2017. Will anybody recognize me today?
Nina Děkaníková*



That’s how I drove to my English camp in 2017

Nina with her granny and Alenka, the best theater dressmaker around



Welcome to Athens

Quite some time ago, at the pre-history of our partnership, I visited the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens to discuss things we could do together, if any, and, if so, what they should be.

“Do you have problems with dogs?” That was one of the important questions I was asked before I went.

I mobilized my inner courage, and, at the same time, I did my best to be polite.

“No, dogs are OK”, I wrote back, and felt a courageous girl.

Approaching a house, partly hidden in the woods, one could expect a bear behind a tree or a lynx likely to jump at you from

behind a thicket, but it didn’t happen. The reality was completely different. Upon entering the house, I was invited to sit down to be introduced to them. Who were they? The youngest and the biggest of all was a one-year old puppy, called Mathilda, followed, one by one, by five other dogs. Characteristic of the pack was diversity, from a noble Yorkshire to a naughty black “something” that didn’t seem likely to listen to anybody.

Instead of bread and salt, a Czech welcome procedure, I was offered an interesting, lovable, and unforgettable company of six, a completely new experience for me...

Iva Marková



Dear friends,

Our little group from Athens Georgia has great „Czech-spectations!“ With this in mind I will share with you some small thoughts from an American Christian new to Olomouč and to English Camp:

The Czechs as a people are uniquely positioned in Central Europe to behave as window, door, and friend to both eastern and western countries and cultures. No one else in Europe holds this unique geographic characteristic and cultural disposition. You are special!

There is so much to learn from and about the Czech people. You, Christian brothers and sisters of Olomouc, are our windows, doors, and friends! We look forward to meeting you and learning from you through participation in church and English Camp. May our

friendships help us to grow strong in our Christian commitments to our own communities, to each other’s, and to the world community.

Our little group looks forward to being among you soon. See you in July!

Tamara Stam





Cliff Brock

My name is Cliff, and I'm very excited to visit you in July. I'm especially curious about your culture, food, vegetation, and generally getting to at least some of you on a deep level. I'm also eager to share myself through music. I love improvising and composing and will share some of my hymns and songs during the camp. Linda and I just met today and talked about some of the music and it will be fun sharing and collaborating with you. I have bittersweet feelings about this trip because it will be my last experience with my friends here at Covenant and in Athens, Ga. At the end of July I'll be packing up my car and moving to the other side of the continent and will start a new life as a graduate student in horticulture. Corvallis, Oregon will be my new home. So at 37 years old I'm making a huge change in my life, but I am forever grateful for my time at Covenant and leading the choir. And I'm really looking forward to not only spending time with you, but also getting to know the people who will be traveling with me to Olomouc. Take care and see you soon.

Cliff Brock



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měsíčník sboru Českobratrské církve evangelické v Olomouci



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Za všechny chyby v tomto čísle se omlouváme.

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