



## James and Heather Cochrane

Location: **Porto, PORTUGAL**

Mission: **Church planting**



It is hard to believe that we have been in N. Ireland for over four months. Since September we have been involved in a period of deputation, which came to an end at the end of November. We very much enjoyed sharing the story of Pedras Vivas church (CPV) and the challenges and encouragements of church planting in Portugal. We also valued the opportunity to thank individuals and congregations for their prayer support and financial giving via the United Appeal, both of which sustained us during many years overseas. Deputation allowed us to reflect on the last 15 years in Portugal, to talk about it and to process the grief we felt after leaving the beloved church and ministry in Porto. In some ways deputation has helped us to “let go” and so enable us to focus on what comes next.

The process of “letting go” was made a little easier as we have been able to follow CPV from a distance and see how, by God’s grace, the church continues to grow with both new Portuguese and Brazilians arriving. On some Sundays the 100 chairs in the church are not enough to accommodate everyone!

## December/January 2024

In our last bulletin we communicated that the church interviewed a pastor. We are delighted to now report that, pending denominational approval, the church has expressed its desire to call him. Pastor Leonardo, aged 39, is from Brazil but is currently studying at Westminster Seminary in the U.S. He will complete this study in May/June 2024. In the meantime, he, along with his wife, hope to visit Portugal for 6 weeks over December/January. During this period, he will preach at CPV and meet with members of Presbytery who will, God willing, approve his call. It is an exciting time for CPV, and we rejoice with our brothers and sisters, that they have reached this important stage. The church is blessed with members who faithfully tithe but the appointment of a new pastor is an extra financial pressure. We are happy that PCI will continue to support CPV financially over a period of 3 years using gifts that we have received over the years for the work in Portugal.

We are now in a period of sabbatical for 2 to 3 months, which will be a time to focus on what comes next. Although we are uncertain about what lies ahead, the Lord has confirmed that we are not to return overseas. This has not been an easy decision, but we trust in the Lord who has always gone before us and who knows what is coming next.

### Prayer Points

- Give thanks for the opportunities to share with many PCI congregations during deputation and for the encouragement we received.
- Give thanks for Pastor Leonardo and pray for his visit to Portugal during December and January.
- Pray for God’s leading for future ministry. We hope that by the end of our sabbatical (February/March 2024) we will be ready to move into our next phase of ministry.