



# Ann-Marie Wilson

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**Location:** Britain



**What I do:** Working to end FGM and violence against women and girls, specifically across Africa and the diaspora where FGM is practised.



**Empowering** people pushed to the edges of life to release their God-given potential

Dear Friends,

I hope that early signs of spring are lifting your spirits and that, like me, you are enjoying nature bursting to life, with longer days as the clocks have moved forward.

In early February I visited India, gathering research regarding FGM. Many people are surprised that FGM, particularly practised by the Dawoodi Bohra, happens in India. The Bohra are a Muslim community hailing from West India, who have settled in over 40 countries. They are well educated business people and qualified professionals working across various fields. The estimate for the FGM prevalence within the community is a staggering 75-85 per cent. Once the silence broke on this practice, the community was highly effective in sharing knowledge, advocacy and lobbying. Girls born to the Bohra sect are the only Muslim women in India who experience FGM.

I first met Masooma in 2013, when speaking at the United Nations (UNCSCW) conference in New York on ending FGM. Originally from Mumbai, she now lives in Delhi, where I visited. The Bohra have kept their practising of FGM highly secretive, yet it affects over one million people. Masooma has been petitioning for an anti FGM law since 2016, after her daughter was cut aged seven. Masooma still has not achieved this law change. Yet she and other Bohra women started a support group called Sahiyo, offering a safe place for women to process their experiences. We are proud that Orchid Project collaborates with Sahiyo helping support their endeavours.

While in India, I marked anti FGM day near the pink city of Jaipur. I also saw Ranthambore National Park and took a 5am visit to the Taj Mahal, fulfilling a lifelong dream. Soon it was back to the UK for marking International Women's day, where I attended an event on ethical tourism and equalising global citizenship.

As part of my church work I was asked to join the Disability Working Group (DWG) of the Diocese of London (<https://www.london.anglican.org/church-and-parish-support/diversity-and-inclusion/disability-ministry/>) and have already made a contribution to its website. The DWG encourages vocations for disabled and neurodivergent people by looking at accessibility in churches, enabling inclusion for all. I enjoyed meeting other members of the group, and am looking forward to using my life experiences to shape decisions for the future. I am currently undertaking neurodiversity training in the diocese, and am attending an away day at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine later this month. In early April I also had a useful meeting with Bishop Anderson, suffragan Bishop of Edmonton.

For Lent I have attended a five-evening, weekly course called Confident Disciples. This attracted over 80 leaders, covering global injustice and discipleship, responding to the climate and ecological emergency we face.



At the Chrism service at  
St Paul's Cathedral.

**Support Ann-Marie Wilson:**  
[churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson](https://churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson)

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



After over five years at Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, my manager has moved on after being a founder employee, and the chaplaincy foundation is complete, so my role will merge with a bereavement role under a paid manager and I will finish working there. It is timely that I have happily started as a volunteer chaplain with North London Hospice (NLH). It has over 3500 patients and offers outpatient support as well as an eighteen bed inpatient ward, for which my longstanding friend Angie and I fundraised in 2021. I will be there every Thursday so please pray for the wonderful work carried out by this and other hospices.

My vicar at Christ Church Barnet (CCB) has been on a three-month sabbatical, so I met and supported the assistant minister, and then we welcomed our refreshed minister back to church. Give thanks for his continued work at CCB. I helped lead a carvery lunch, and we organised and lead lunch for the single-headed household group again this month. I am also attending the Precious Women breakfast where it will be good to catch up with some amazing people across all Barnet and Edmonton churches.

I was excited to go on an Easter Pilgrimage to Rome. Following the death of Pope Francis, I saw the funeral and was there for five of the official days of mourning, including seeing his burial and final resting place. Please pray for the newly appointed Pope Leo. I am praying that he will continue the good work Pope Francis began.

For Lent, I gave up going to bed too late, leaving insufficient time for a balanced life, and stopped "burning the candle at both ends"! Watch this space. As Easter approached, I attended the Chrism Service on Maundy Thursday at St Paul's Cathedral for all ministers and lay ministers, to collect holy oils to give to the sick and dying, and other church Easter services. I recently visited the twelfth century chapel at St Elizabeth and St Joseph, founded as a hospice, where the altar was covered in sackcloth for Lent, which was very moving.

My health is reasonably stable and I lead a healthy active lifestyle. I have recently seen a hand specialist, as I have a fractured right hand for over eight months that was undiagnosed. Please pray that I will receive corrective surgery soon. An orthopaedic surgeon recently commented on my wobbly foot, saying "it is the most of use he has ever seen". It is miraculously healed!

On a serious note, I need to share that I am facing a significant reduction in funding. This is because 60 per cent of my funding is no longer available due to changed circumstances and church priorities. The situation means that I have had to have difficult conversations with CMS about the need to reduce my working hours to reflect the changed funding situation. Please pray and share, and if you feel moved to support me in my anti FGM, end of life and church pastoral ministries, please contact CMS ([hello@churchmissionsociety.org](mailto:hello@churchmissionsociety.org)) or myself, or go to my CMS page: [churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson](https://churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson) – we would be very grateful for any additional support.

This is my 25th anniversary of being in full time mission and my 10th year post my serious cancer diagnosis. Thank you for enabling millions to be helped.

#### Upcoming commitments include:

- 16–20 May: Mallory Abbey retreat (rescheduled from April)
- 7 June: Disability Working Group away day
- 17 July: Mallory Abbey Benedictine training day
- 28 July–3 August: CMS Summer Gathering

Blessings, Ann-Marie



*Photos from top to bottom: Me at the Taj Mahal during my FGM research trip to India; I'm starting as a volunteer chaplain at North London Hospice; with Bishop Anderson Jeremiah; at the Precious Women breakfast with Mirella.*



## Empowering people pushed to the edges of life

**I've been encouraged to hear recent mission stories** from around my wider area of work. In Ukraine, families are being assured they are not alone amid the hardship of war, and my colleagues in Paraguay have seen a young man overcome challenges to learn academically and spiritually. Read more at [churchmissionsociety.org/empower](https://churchmissionsociety.org/empower)