



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 reach their God-given potential

Dear friends,

As autumn arrives and the nights draw in, I find myself reflecting on how faith, community, and purpose intertwine in every part of life. This quarter has been one of learning, giving, and gratitude, opportunities to connect with others, serve and deepen my understanding of compassion in action.

The Orchid Project continues our vital mission to end female genital mutilation (FGM) around the world. Our recently published policy briefing on Malaysia and Indonesia revealed that Asia accounts for at least 35 per cent of the global FGM burden affecting approximately 80 million women and girls (fgmcri.org).

The practice in these countries is deeply tied to cultural traditions, ancestral connections and life-cycle rituals. Additionally, legal protections remain inadequate.

I joined the research team's webinar hosted by the Orchid Project. During the discussion, someone raised an important question about the role of men in ending FGM. One participant said, "Men must continually be engaged as they play a vital part in their household's understanding of FGM." Another added, "Men can play the 'it's not (done) in my name' card because many have communicated that they do not need this practice for marriage." Those words resonated deeply with me. I left, determined to explore further how men and women together, or separately, can help transform cultural narratives that perpetuate harm.

In October I visited Turkey as part of Orchid's Middle East profiling. FGM is higher than imagined as the region has a high population of diaspora from Sudan, Somalia and other Middle Eastern/Asian countries. Turkey needs much prayer for anti-FGM and women's equality.

August was a month of creativity. I was honoured to be a VIP guest at the opening night of a portrait exhibition in London with fellow cancer survivors. The artist had sketched me, among others, while we were undergoing chemotherapy – a moving reminder of how beauty and resilience can rise from the most difficult seasons.

I was invited to the USA recently, and was privileged to deliver a talk on FGM to medical students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. It was encouraging to see dozens of young professionals eager to learn of this issue. Their thoughtful questions and interest gave me hope for the next generation of advocates and healthcare leaders.

September marked my completion of mandatory training with the North London Hospice (NLH), where I



Visiting a mosque in
Istanbul, Turkey

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To the edges**



now serve as a volunteer chaplain. It's humbling and sacred work – offering spiritual and emotional support to inpatients and loved ones navigating end-of-life care.

I also enjoyed some lighter moments this month: a visit to the Hindu and Gujarat temples in Neasden with lunch and a spot of sari shopping in preparation for visiting conservative hot climates in late 2025.

Later in the month, I attended a Disability Working Group meeting, in preparation for Disability Awareness month. This was followed by a thought-

provoking session at New Ground Co-Housing run by two trainee death doulas, titled Doing Death Differently. We explored how we, as people of faith, can bring hope into our discussions about mortality – understanding that earthly death is part of God's story for us all.

September closed with an uplifting concert and harvest celebration at St Mary the Virgin church, Monken Hadley. The evening was a joyful reminder of community and shared faith.

October began with a visit to a dear friend, Sister Pat, mass, and lunch near St Michael's Church, Wood Green. Pat and I first met during our studies on the Caleb course at St Mellitus College, and it was wonderful to reconnect and hear about the faithful work she continues to do. I give thanks for her ministry and pray for continued health.

I joined fellow licensed lay ministers for tea and pastries with the Bishop of Edmonton. It was an enriching afternoon of conversation and shared vision for the future of the diocese. Please continue to keep our bishops in your prayers – that they may be guided by wisdom and grace in their leadership, especially Bishop Sarah, who is now Archbishop of Canterbury.

I was also invited to speak on behalf of CMS at St Peter's Church, Northampton. Returning to share updates on the global fight against FGM was both humbling and heartening. It was wonderful to reconnect with familiar faces and meet new friends, all eager to support the cause. The afternoon concluded with a delicious cream tea – truly a treat and a perfect ending to a meaningful day!

At this time last year, I shared with you that there was a significant shortfall in my funding. Thank you so much to those who gave in response – I am so grateful! I am pleased to say my funding gap is smaller than it was, but my funding is still not sustainable. However, I know I serve a God who provides. Please pray with me for my funding to increase so that I can continue to serve God at the edges. If you are able to increase your regular giving or give an additional gift this year, I would really appreciate you prayerfully considering it. You can give online at churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson, by calling 01865 787489, or if you received this letter by post, by completing the enclosed form. Thank you so much for walking on this mission journey with me.

I am continually reminded that acts of kindness, shared prayer and conversation are gifts of love and can spark change. My prayer for the coming months is that we all continue to live out our faith with courage, compassion, and creativity – trusting that the seeds we plant today will blossom into hope for a better tomorrow.

Ann-Marie



Photos from top to bottom: With some students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham; the NLH spiritual care team; a visit to Neasden temple; with Joan Bottrill at St Peter's Church, Northampton



Empowering people pushed to the edges of life

It builds my faith when I hear stories from other CMS partners working with people pushed to the edges of life. I hope that you're inspired as you read about Elise and Jon in Thailand who are working to keep families together and children out of care. And about Makol in South Sudan whose life got dramatically saved during a peace rally. You can read their stories, and others, at churchmissionsociety.org/empower

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