



# Ann-Marie Wilson

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Contact details:  
annmariewils@googlemail.com



**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.

Dear friends,

This spring of 2022 has been a unique time in my life – one in which I have been navigating the beginnings of a new chapter in an especially significant way, and I am delighted to share my news with you.

## Moving on from 28 Too Many and looking ahead

This year has been a momentous time for the anti-FGM charity that I founded 12 years ago, 28 Too Many. After a long process of prayerful discernment, we finalised its merger with another anti-FGM charity, The Orchid Project. I stepped down from my role as executive director at 28 Too Many, and, after my upcoming sabbatical, I have a new role as senior research advisor. It is hard to put into words how precious a time it has been moving on from 28 Too Many! I am immensely grateful the journey we have been on together, the countless wonderful people I have met and who have made a profound impression on my life, and the grace through which we were able to surpass our goals of seeing a 10 per cent reduction in FGM in 10 countries in 10 years.

My sabbatical (from August to January) will be a time of rest and reflection after this huge time of transition, and I will be able to pray about what my ongoing commitment to anti-FGM advocacy and activism around the world will look like. I imagine this will involve speaking engagements, especially through my book, *Overcoming*, which shares my personal story in the fight against FGM. My other missions work in chaplaincy and pastoral care in two hospices and in my church, St Barnabas, will also slow down during my sabbatical, although I will be supporting pastorally on an ad hoc basis at church.

## Unexpected and serious challenges

Unfortunately, in the mix of celebrations and finishing a race well run as executive director of 28 Too Many, I have also found myself in the midst of unexpected health challenges, which have been extremely difficult. In May I had a second hip replacement, however there have been serious complications from it. These have been severely painful, and my right foot is not working normally. Where I was previously fleet-footed and regularly enjoyed long walks with friends, I now struggle to walk far, and certainly not without orthotics and crutches. Aside from the physical pain I have been through, it has been a huge emotional blow, and the doctors are not sure if or when I might regain the use of my foot. I am still in the process of digesting this and searching for fresh faith in the face of this challenge, and I would certainly value your prayer!

I am hugely grateful for the support of friends, near and far. Local friends have been amazingly generous



*Getting glammed up  
for farewell parties!*

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[churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson](https://churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson)

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



through Meal Train, where they signed up to cook and share a meal with me in the evenings. Please do sign up, if you are in London! It would be so lovely to share a meal with you. It has been so special to have this, and there have been extra unexpected blessings, such as an impromptu creative session with one St Barnabas member, who is a trainee art therapist. I have found myself as the recipient of chaplaincy support, both in and out of hospital. It has been so touching for me, and I have an even stronger belief in the value of pastoral work.

### Learning and development

As always, it is a pleasure for me to continue in ongoing learning, and during the last few months I have been especially privileged to join in comprehensive training courses from the Church of England on work as a pastoral assistant and on responding to domestic abuse. I meet periodically with the Bishop of Edmonton to discuss how my ministry might develop, and I look forward to seeing him in July. I am also looking forward to CMS's people in mission conference,

which will be a special time of receiving from the richness of people's journeys and testimonies from around the world.

### Leisure and pleasure

Over Easter I journeyed with a friend from London up to Iona, where I spent the weekend on a retreat with others from different countries. On Good Friday we took part in a walk marking the twelve Stations of the Cross, and a pilgrimage to St Columba's Bay, where St Columba and his monks landed in 563 AD, bringing Christianity to Scotland. The natural beauty around us was stunning, and it was simply gorgeous to see baby puffins – called pufflings! – hatch on Easter Sunday.

It has also been so lovely for me to be able to join in with major milestones with dear friends, and this has included weddings and a 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, and more to come! Locally, I've really enjoyed different significant community gatherings, including various farewells for key staff members at my church, including our beloved vicar and his wife, Henry and Jane Kendall. It was so much fun to join in with a Platinum Jubilee street party, and I am looking forward to more, with our World Mission Society summer picnic, and an evangelistic brunch, called Precious Women. I will be taking a new friend from an Iranian Muslim background, and would value your prayer for her and her husband, who is seeking truth.



### Prayer points

- ◆ Recruitment of a new PA for me.
- ◆ Healing for my foot and comfort and strength after this difficult time.
- ◆ Refreshing and rest during this convalescence before my sabbatical.
- ◆ Hope, healing and strength for those facing serious illness and mental health issues, and, locally, especially as there are temporarily fewer pastoral staff at St Barnabas.
- ◆ Comfort and resilience for those in the caring professions and who are at risk of burnout.

Wishing everyone a peaceful, hopeful summer.

With love, Ann-Marie.

*Photos from top to bottom: Recovering in hospital after my hip operation; Meal Train with a dear friend from St Barnabas; Seeing the pufflings hatch on Iona; Bunting and baking for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee!*



## Going further with Church Mission Society

**Africa Conference: Friday 7–Sunday 9 October** – A weekend residential with opportunity to connect online. This year's theme is Out of Africa: Learning together about mission. Book your place now at [churchmissionsociety.org/ac2022](https://churchmissionsociety.org/ac2022)

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