



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.

Dear friends,

Three months after hip surgery, and sadly diagnosed with foot drop, I was ready for some holiday to enjoy a summer of celebrations, many of which had been delayed by COVID. I went to the wedding of a goddaughter in Exeter, also enjoying time with her mum – a friend for over 50 years. This was shortly followed by the engagement party of friends from St Barnabas church. I loved the Exeter Cathedral worship and my visit to their church in the city.

I also had a “home from home” holiday for nine days when two young cousins from the Lake District joined me for a first solo trip to the big city! We visited the Natural History and Science museums, and London Zoo for dinosaur and penguin experiences! We also went to see Much Ado at The Globe and a very different show called Heathers: The Musical to get a culture fix!

I loved attending my second wedding this year of Jewish and Christian blended ceremonies, with the ceremony in Mill Hill and the celebration in London – travelling there on the top deck of a vintage red bus!

I enjoyed seeing behind the scenes of a National Trust property, Ightham Mote, for a free tour of the buildings and gardens, to understand how they invest legacy donations. Similarly, I attended a Science Museum talk on new vaccines that may help in combating cancer. One of the learning benefits of the COVID pandemic.

In September, a friend joined me to visit the Queen lying in state, and lay flowers in Green Park. The Queen reminds me of the importance of doing our duty, and her passing feels like the passing of an era.

Very sadly I have experienced another four deaths this year, the closest being of my dear uncle, who I saw in late spring. I will now become the custodian of a couple of pieces of furniture he and my granddad made in the 1900s. I saw my uncle in the Chapel of Rest, and then saw many at the funeral who had last seen me as a small child. Apparently I have not changed in over 50 years!

I recently went on my fourth retreat this year as I feel God gave me the word Pilgrimage for this study sabbatical season. I stayed near my cousins in Tebay, in Mungrisdale – in an isolated cottage on the six-acre



At the wedding of my goddaughter in Devon

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grounds of a ninth century manor. It was seven miles from a post-box, and 12 miles from a shop! I loved the autumn tints and being in the foot of the mountains, and walked the Celtic labyrinth and around the stone circle.

I re-joined my cousins for a few days, joining their monthly Wandering & Chattering gathering. We studied God-made and manmade channels, then had some silence before sharing homemade supper, photos of the walk and reflections on the time together.

I also had a few day trips to London – one gifted trip to see the Klimt immersive art, which started with cake and coffee in Eataly in Shoreditch, followed by a curry in Brick Lane. Another day I was back there for Diwali and the Museum of the Home, reflecting on the place faith has in our lives. I also went to the Sherlock Holmes Museum, a half-term ballet of the Ugly Duckling and painted a pot with the daughter of my bubble family. Easy joys!

By October, I properly started my study sabbatical, and am mostly resting from my old roles until next spring. However, I am doing a preach to a women's group in a church in Purley soon, and a Remembrance service for Noah's Ark Hospice in November. We also had our last board meeting, and completed our annual review, which I will share next time.

Please keep me in your prayers as I refresh over these next few months.

Ann-Marie xx



Photos from top to bottom: Visiting Exeter Cathedral in connection with friends' engagement; sharing at Lambeth Conference on safer churches; Diwali at the Museum of the Home, Hoxton; with the new Orchid Project CEO at 10-year celebration



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