



Anna Sims

Link Letter no. 25 | December 2022



Location: Peru



What I do: Supporting female, English-speaking inmates and ex-offenders in Lima through prison ministry Walking in Liberty.

Dear Friends,

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness shall not overcome it. John 1:5

When the days started getting shorter, I often reflected on how much better I am getting. Last winter, I was in the depths of the depression and embraced the darkness and winter as I went into hibernation mode. This year I'm out and about much more and while I'm still having to be really careful about how much I try to do each day, I am embracing the change in seasons in a different way. Instead of wanting to give in to the darkness I am excited about what lies dormant in this season and hopeful about what new shoots will appear next.

My brief visit to Lima in June was positive.

My main aim was to maintain my visa and I saw anything more as a bonus. I was able to keep my visa active and in addition to that, during the first week I was able to catch up with a number of friends in Lima and attend an in-person service at iCafe church (for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic). It was the middle of winter so Lima was typically grey and damp. I was able to spend a day in the foothills of the Andes on the outskirts of Lima and see a bit of sun and swim in an extremely cold outdoor pool. During my second week I had meetings with Paul Tester (CMS), Bishop Jorge, my pastor, Francis, the consul at the British Embassy and Mary, my prison ministry colleague. It was good to be able to reconnect with so many people, get an idea for where the different ministries were at that point and of course, see my rabbit Pinky again.

Since my return to the UK, I have been slowly taking on more work responsibilities and attending CMS events, including the annual People in Mission conference held at All Nations College (again, a first since the beginning of the pandemic) and also the CMS Adelante Latin America conference in Oxford, which is where I shared in public for the first time, giving a brief update and also showing my (still unfinished) wilderness quilt for the first time. The quilt is a visual representation of my recent "wilderness experience", showing a twisty broken path on one side and different aspects of God's character that have been particularly prevalent to me during this time on the other side. I am deliberately leaving it



During my recent visit to Lima

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



unfinished until after my last church visit in December as a reminder that I am still not through this and am still in an unfinished state with rough edges. I am only visiting some of my link churches this autumn but the visits have been encouraging for me so far, and again, it has been good to reconnect with many familiar faces and meet new people since my last link church visits in 2018/19.

Many of the decisions I have needed to make have seemed overwhelmingly large at the time and I'm finding Emily P. Freeman's *The Next Right Thing* journal incredibly helpful. The format of the journal is based around seasons, rather than calendar months, and

a variety of bullet point lists and reflections, breaking down larger decisions into smaller manageable chunks and offering a space where I can easily reflect on and track my decision-making processes. Reflecting back at the end of each month and season, again I am thankful for how far I have come since I started using the journal in March.

Making decisions about the Next Right Thing seems much more manageable and so I am currently working towards returning to Peru at the end of December, for a year initially, and seeing what life looks like for me in Lima. There are still many uncertainties, particularly surrounding prison ministry and my accommodation, but January and February, the long summer holiday in Peru, are normally quieter months and so I have some time to start settling back into Lima, using Spanish and reconnecting with people before all the activities start up again in March.

I'm leaving the UK straight after Christmas as I am keen to go to the very first CMS Latin America in-person conference which is being held in Ushuaia on the southern tip of Argentina at the beginning of January. I am looking forward to having some time with CMS colleagues who will be travelling from as far away as Guatemala and the UK to be there. I am excited to visit the amazing creation in that part of the world and hopefully leaving refreshed, ready to start my next, albeit shorter, term in Peru.

I just want to thank you all again for your support during this time and as we enter the season of waiting and preparation of Advent, I pray that you will know the hope that is to come in whatever you're experiencing at the moment.

May you all have a very happy Christmas as we remember and celebrate the birth of the Light of the World and the promise that, even if it feels like it is possible at some points in our journeys, the darkness will not overcome the light.

Love,

Anna x



Photos from top to bottom: Cieneguilla, on the outskirts of Lima; iCafe Sunday service; baking with the Tester girls; sharing at my sending church, Holy Trinity Platt, Manchester



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