

Revd Michael Burns  
Christ Church West Wimbledon  
Sermon : Second Sunday of Advent  
Sunday 4th December 2022

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**Baptism of Poppy – 4/12/2022 – Number 35!**

**Preached by Michael Burns**

A month after I arrived here in 2017, I baptised my first baby – a little girl called Lily. A month before I leave here, I am baptising my last baby – a little girl called Poppy. What synergy it is that they are both girls, are both named after flowers – and both are the children of couples who are very much a part of the life of the church here. Indeed, Poppy is being baptised in the same church that Mum Caroline was baptised at in 19... and also where proud parents Caroline and Ben were married 5 years ago. One question I haven't asked Caroline and Ben is what they want for Poppy. If I had I expect that they would say something along the lines that they want the best for her – the best food, the best clothes, the best education, the best job – the best in all sorts of ways. But perhaps for those who profess the Christian faith, the best best is what we are doing here this morning for Poppy. The bringing up and guiding of children has to be the toughest job in the world and of course the work does not ease up as children grow older. But the place of the Christian faith is still, 21 centuries later, of fundamental importance for many families, especially those trying to bring up children. Following Jesus of Nazareth continues to be the ultimate goal for many and the one strand which keeps their life together as we want God to bless us and those for whom we love and care.

This morning you all have your part to play in the celebration for Poppy. Family and friends have a special role and responsibility, not just to enjoy the hospitality of the party but to support and pray for Ben and Caroline as they continue to bring up Poppy in the best way that they are able. And of course, Poppy is also being welcomed into the family of her Church as she begins her journey today as the newest Christian – and that is what the regular members of Christ Church are doing this morning – praying for and supporting Poppy’s family, whether you know them or not, because we are all bound together by the invisible thread that links us into one, the link of love which comes from God and leads back to God through Jesus who wants us above all to be one united and loving family.