

I wonder if you saw the news the other week that two men on opposite sides of the globe had created an 'Earth Sandwich' by placing bread on precise points, either side of the planet, at the same time.

February in church is a bit like that sandwich, with rather different celebrations either end of the month.

On Sunday 2nd we commemorate Candlemas – the moment when Jesus was 40 days old, being brought for the first time into the Jewish temple in Jerusalem as all observant families did, giving thanks for their firstborn. What made this visit special was the presence of two elderly people Simeon and Anna; Anna realises this child will one day be the Lord who can save people eternally and so tells everyone about him. Simeon is a man who listened to God's voice-he was not a priest or had any special title – just 'one of the crowd' but given a special task that day by God to proclaim that he had now seen, as God promised him, the one who would bring the light of God into the world – his song which is known as the 'Nunc Dimittis' is still sung at Evening Services, and you can hear it at our special evensong in St Mary's Downe at 4.30pm on Sunday 2nd.

The other bit of the sandwich is on Wednesday 26th when Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Christian season of Lent. I've written a lot about Lent over the years in this magazine, and you can check through the archives to find out more if you are so inclined! Lent is a time for reflection, and the ashes received on the forehead at the Ash Wednesday service (this year 7.30pm in Cudham Church) remind us of our own mortality. I wonder, though, following the fires in Australia and the growing sense that a climate catastrophe is possible in the not too distant future means our emphasis might rightly be on the ash speaking to us about the changes we all need to make.

This year's Church of England Lent campaign #liveLent (churchofengland.org/liveLent) invites us to care for God's creation with a daily challenge. Our Lent course will be focusing on caring for God's world too – look out for details through Cudham and Downe mailings and come along if you can. The 'Earth Sandwich' shows how we can work together across the world; such actions speak of a care for God's creation which Jesus was born into, and whose loving actions we are called to follow.

Enjoy your sandwich – earthly or not, John