



### **EASTER MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM MODERATOR REV CHARLES FINNIE**

I wonder what surprises you? What is it that makes your heart skip a beat?

I am sure that people will have different memories of things that have had an effect on them in the past. We will have moments in our lives that we look back on and remember how that moment, that interaction with someone else, the decision that we made or was made for us, somehow surprised us just at that time. I do not know about you, but I love reading or hearing the stories of life of people, which is especially important in the midst of bereavement. And I read recently something of the story of Anne de Gualle. When Anne was born in 1928, she was diagnosed with Down's Syndrome. Down syndrome, then was cruelly mislabelled and misunderstood and it usually led to social exclusion and institutionalisation, especially among prominent families. Her parents were advised to place her into a home. However, Charles de Gaulle and his wife Yvonne answered with clarity. Their opinion was that Anne did not ask to come into the world. Therefore, it was their duty to make her happy. And so in their home, one rule was sacred: Anne would never be made to feel lesser.

History remembers Charles de Gaulle as distant, iron-willed, austere. The soldier who defied surrender in 1940, who became the voice of Free France and rallied a nation. He became president and he remained steadfast amid political chaos.

In Anne's presence, his demeanour noticeably changed, something softened. The rigid posture relaxed, gave way to play. He danced clumsily, little steps to make her smile. He sang songs and he took part in pantomimes, just for her. He walked hand in hand with her around the garden at Colombey where they lived, speaking quietly about simple things she could grasp. During her brief life, he was the one person who could make her laugh. And, I understand that Anne had only one word she could say clearly. "Papa." Her family shielded her with devotion, and so no photos were taken during wartime publicity, for he knew how the public could be very harsh over such things. Anne was teased without knowing why, but that never happened at home.

Then, what originated as a private commitment evolved into a public mission. In 1945, the de Gaulle's, purchased a Château, and together they founded the 'Fondation Anne de Gaulle', a home for young women with intellectual disabilities. At a time when society offered little but neglect, they built dignity, structure, and care. The foundation would house dozens of girls whose families lacked the means or courage the de Gaulles possessed. The 'Fondation Anne de Gaulle' is still running today.

Anne's life was short. Just weeks after her twentieth birthday, she died in her father's arms at the family home. She would be buried there too. Charles de Gualle kept a photograph in a frame, that he took everywhere with him, and puts the survival of an assassination attempt in 1962, down to the photo frame as bullets tore through his car but were deflected by the frame.

He once called her "the grace of God" in his life. He said she taught him to look beyond the failures of men. The leader who carried a nation's pride found his deepest strength not in command rooms or battlefields, but in the gentle presence of a daughter the world told him to hide.

I am surprised by how the simplest of things in life can be taken for granted by others. Love, affection and care. All things exhibited by God towards us and seen especially at this time in the resurrection of Jesus, the vindication of God's promise in a person. If the little bit of the story of the de Gaulle's surprises you, listen to the story of Easter and be surprised by the love, care and affection of God, for you.

Have a joy filled, praise moving, God encountering Easter. *Charles*

# PARISH OF WEST MORAY

## RURAL & URBAN EASTER SERVICES

### ECUMENICAL EASTER SERVICES DURING HOLY WEEK

Monday 30 March – St Leonard’s – 5.00pm

Tuesday 31 March – Kinloss – 5.00pm

Wednesday 01 April – St Margaret’s – 5.00pm

Friday 03 April – St John’s – 2.00pm

### RURAL AND URBAN EASTER SERVICES

27<sup>th</sup> March – Dyke Primary School Easter Service

11.00am – Community welcome to attend.

29<sup>th</sup> March – Palm Sunday – at St Leonard’s – 10.30am  
Rev Stuart Finlayson (including Sacrament of Baptism)

2<sup>nd</sup> April – Maundy Thursday Communion at  
St Leonard’s – 7.00pm – Rev. Stuart Finlayson

5<sup>th</sup> April - Easter Sunday Service at Kinloss – 10.00am –  
TBC

5<sup>th</sup> April – Easter Sunday Service at St Leonards –  
10.30am – Rev John Morrison

5<sup>th</sup> April – Easter Sunday Service at Dyke – 10.30am –  
Worship Team

5<sup>th</sup> April – Easter Sunday Service at Dallas – 10.30pm –  
Rev Peter Robertson

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### EASTER PRAYER



Risen Lord,  
On this glorious morning, we rejoice in  
the light that breaks through the  
darkness.  
Thank You for the gift of life renewed,  
for love that conquers fear,  
and for hope that no tomb can hold.  
Fill our hearts with the joy of Your  
resurrection,  
that we may carry Your peace into every  
place we go.  
Help us to live as witnesses of Your  
grace,  
sharing kindness, mercy, and  
compassion with all.  
Today, we rise with You in spirit—  
ready to walk in faith,  
to love without limits,  
and to shine with the light of Your  
eternal promise.  
Amen.

