

**SUMMER SERVICE OF PRAISE:** Traveling a lot this summer? Away for the weekends? Desiring a more casual, alternative worship experience? Join us every Wednesday at 6pm in the FUMC sanctuary for our midweek worship celebration! Our Summer Service of Praise is an informal time of singing, prayer, Scripture, and brief faith message. For more information or to offer your gifts of singing, instrumentation, dance, and/or other creative art, talk to Pastor Kim!

**FACEBOOK FAN?:** If you would like to post something on the FUMC Facebook page to share with our faith community, please submit your post to Angie at [fumcangiesmith@gmail.com](mailto:fumcangiesmith@gmail.com). We'd love to see your pics of our church-wide activities and ministries!

**MEMORIAL GIFTS:** If you would like to give an "in memory" gift to FUMC, you may designate it to any area listed below: Contingency Fund, Endowment Fund, Memorial Fund, Music Fund, Adult Exercise Class, Salkehatchie Summer Service, Bus Fund, Youth Ministries, Children's Ministries, Building Upkeep Fund, Parsonage Upkeep Fund, Grounds Upkeep Fund, Pastor's Discretionary Fund, and named Scholarships. Call the church office for more information.

**GOOD NEIGHBOR:** The Men's Class at FUMC is offering a helping hand. Do you need any help to change a light bulb, clean the gutters, rake the yard, wash the car, or go to the store? Whatever your need, give us a chance to be a good neighbor to you. We're not professionals and we'll not bill you for services, but we are handy at doing many things. Our intent is not to take any work away from our local businesses and service professionals, but to simply offer a helping hand. This service is available to all FUMC members, and anyone you know who is in need of help. You may contact Roger Wolfe at 843-537-7496.

**ON-SITE EXERCISE ANYONE?** Please join our Senior Exercise Class every Tuesday at 11am in the Fellowship Hall. Standing exercises and chair exercises are both offered. Stretch bands and light weights are provided. Call the church office for more information.

**PICKLEBALL LEAGUE!** Please join us every week at the Cheraw Tennis Courts as "church ladies" from the Cheraw Community practice and play Pickleball. Please consult the weekly calendar for day and time. Talk to Pastor Kim for details.

**UMW RADA PRODUCTS:** The UMW have RADA Products for sale. See JoAnne Morgan or call her at (843-537-3537) if you are interested in purchasing any of these new items.

**A MINISTRY OF SERVICE:** Our Nurture and Care Committee offers a transport ministry by members of First UMC. If you or a loved one needs a ride to a doctor's appointment or medical errand, please call the church office. We have several volunteers on the roster ready and willing to give you a lift, physically and spiritually! Call the church office today and let our sisters and brothers in Christ serve you!

**DID YOU KNOW?:** First UMC offers a Nurture and Care Ministry. If you have a loved one who could use a visit and a word of cheer, and/or if you know of a shut-in who needs some caring company, please contact Trina Mills at 843-537-9502 or 843-910-0518 or call the church office.

**IN HONOR OF:**

**IN HONOR OF THEODORE BURNS**  
*M&M Rhett Butler*



# WHEN CHURCH HURTS



By B.J. Funk

It seems to be widespread. Pastors know the sting of criticism. Church members know the pain of being disappointed in the person sitting in the next pew. Worship leaders choose beautiful music only to hear the drumroll of gossip over the selection. Administrative assistants stop their work to put out a fire of pessimism circulating in the halls. Church staff know the overwhelming need to squelch loud cries of discord. We get so busy with the busyness of church that we can't get around to the real business of church, which is Jesus Christ and his beautiful, marvelous antidote to a sinful world. Regularly and without warning, church becomes a bed of contention, disagreements, and pain.

We expected something different from sinners? The world outside of Church understands this dilemma better than we do. They don't expect perfection from us. They always knew we weren't. But they knew we thought we were. That's why they stay out.

Church is not only a building but it is also the people who come to the building. Does anyone need to be reminded that the church is an imperfect institution? Imperfection sits on each pew, resides in each Sunday school class, and stands behind the pulpit. We still, however, expect perfection to somehow gloss over the human errors and flaws walking into the sanctuary on a Sunday morning. What we are on the sidewalk before entering church is what we are when we enter church. Nothing changes inside of us in the two minutes it takes us to enter the church and find a seat.

When we remember that Christ died for the church, we feel pale and weak, hopeless within the one institution that should give us hope.

We allow our disappointment in church people to define our commitment to church. What was solid belief often becomes feigned reality as we move further and further away from the church that hurts. Is there any hope for us? Will the church eventually die from the hypocrisy we show the world?

Unless we can connect in Sunday's couple of hours with Jesus of Nazareth, we will walk out the very same way we walked in. But if we can seek to know the Lord, new life will begin to seep through the deep pores of sin and make wonderful changes in us. We can be born again. It can happen anywhere Jesus is, even inside an imperfect church.

That's what we hope for. Sweet relief from the hopelessness of sin. Amen.

You are sitting on your pew all hot and angry over the church that hurts when suddenly you hear a tiny child in front of the church singing in a beautiful, angelic voice, "This little light of mine. I'm gonna let it shine." And for a moment you forget why you are tense. You were so busy with church drama that you had forgotten there was supposed to be a little light – a light of mine – shining in a dark and weary world. As you hum that song, the sound of worship sends a melodious tug into your soul and soon the heartbeat of worship has joined your heartbeat. Your repentant heart gets still as you remember why you came to church. Within the loud drumroll of discord, you had actually forgotten. But now you know.

You came to worship, to join your efforts with others in a glorious song of praise, a sound that knocks down any hurt you have felt as you rest your soul in the beauty of meaningful worship.

The people haven't changed. Sinners still hold the majority. But you have changed. You remember why you used to like church, why you needed church, and you want to find that feeling again.

Others may hurl pain at you, but you decide to be bigger than that. You won't hurl back. You will forgive. Finally you have found a bit of hope, an encouragement that bounces throughout your body like a new tennis ball.

The church will survive. God will never let it die. He will continue using repentant sinners to keep his church alive. But now you know what to do. You will bring out your little light to shine.

As long as there is just one little light shining – just one – there will always be a church.