***Joy, Hope and Faith***

***Horizons* Skit**

**By Chris Wolf**

This skit was written by Chris Wolf for the 2022 PW in the Synod of the Covenant Gathering. Presbyterian Women groups and leaders are welcome to adapt the script to their setting, volunteers, staging, Gathering theme and other needs.

Cast: Hope, Joy, Lovey, Person One, Person Two, 2–4 audience volunteers to shout a line each

Props: *Horizons* magazine and Bible study

**Part 1: Hope Meets Joy**

*Hope walks in, heaves a big sigh, slumps shoulders, heaves another big sigh*

*Joy enters from the other side, widely smiling and joyfully singing: “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy [Down in My Heart],”1 and sees Hope*

JOY: *(Still smiling and bubbly, talking enthusiastically!)* Hi Hope! It’s so good to see you! It’s been a long time. My how time flies! How are you doing? Life good for your family?

HOPE: Life has been really busy for me and my family. You know, activities at church, going to children’s sporting events, working part-time at my husband’s insurance agency, volunteering with Habitat. Yep, yep, yep—busy, busy, busy!

JOY: It’s a joy-filled life! Blessings on top of blessings!

*(pauses, looks at Hope)* Hope, what’s wrong? You look . . . discouraged? sad? Where’s our hope? *(tries to push Hope’s face into a smile)*

HOPE: (*big sigh)* I’m just so discouraged. I think I’ve lost my hope. Life is so exhausting.

JOY: What do you mean? We have to have hope!

HOPE: Joy, I just don’t see any joy in the world. How can I *be* hope? I have none. (*Hope heaves another big sigh*) I mean, there’s so much sickness and people struggling, gun violence, human trafficking, war, racism, misinformation, people arguing and spreading fear. It just seems like people are plain mean, sometimes or most of the time, even. I’ve survived on hope, but my well is running dry.

There is no hope. I can’t be what isn’t.

(Shouted responses from people in audience)

Snap out of it!

Put on your big-girl panties.

It’ll be better tomorrow!

Turn that frown upside down!

JOY: Oh Hope, I’m sorry to hear you’re struggling! Ignore them. Maybe you could pray more?

HOPE: I’m pretty sure that God is sick and tired of me whining.

(*Joy hugs Hope. Then, two people from the front row stand and step in front of Hope and Joy.)*

PERSON ONE: We interrupt this heart-wrenching moment with a PSA.

JOY: *(jumps between them, enthusiastically speaking to the audience)* That means “Public Service Announcement.”

*(The two people turn and frown at her.)*

PERSON ONE: (*Turning back to the audience)* As we were going to say . . . .

PERSON TWO: We are here to tell you about a *wonderful* magazine! *(holds up Horizons)*

PERSON ONE: *Horizons*! It is the *best* thing I receive in the mail! It brings me such encouragement.

PERSON TWO: Every issue includes a devotion, and highlights books I should read.

PERSON ONE: Can’t have too many books!

PERSON TWO: There are articles about what PW groups are doing.

PERSON ONE: My PW group has gotten some good ideas that we’ve tried and liked!

PERSON TWO: It helps us put our PW Purpose into practice

PERSON ONE and TWO: Nurturing our faith, supporting mission, working for justice and peace, building an inclusive community

PERSON ONE: And don’t forget the feature articles! Did you read the one about Jane Parker Huber?

PERSON TWO: Yes, I love her hymns! She was a GREAT part of Presbyterian Women.

PERSON ONE: All of that and Bible Study Resources for the current study and more!

PERSON TWO: Yes, Bible study! the other GREAT resource PW publishes! *(holds up Bible study)*

PERSON ONE: I can’t begin to tell you about what a great resource this is. Theologically sound, engaging, makes us think!

PERSON TWO: Always helping us to work out our life of faith and live into our faith.

PERSON ONE: I love getting together with other PWs and church members to discuss the studies.

PERSON TWO: By the way, if you subscribe to *Horizons*, your subscription includes the Bible study.

PERSON ONE: That’s right! A print subscription is $24.95 for five issues a year, plus the Bible study. Or, if your church orders studies for everyone, you can subscribe to a digital edition of *Horizons*—five issues of the magazine a year for just $15!

PERSON TWO: What a deal!!!

PERSON ONE and TWO: *(in unison, looking at each other)* I do *love* a deal! (*return to their seats*)

JOY: (*to Hope*) That’s it! I know what you need! I’m on my way to our PW in the Synod Gathering! And the theme is “Renewed Hope.” You *need* to come with me. I just know that you will begin to find your Hope again.

*(Joy takes Hope’s hand, they start walking off stage)*

Besides, I heard they have cupcakes tonight! That always makes me feel better. Come on, Hope. Let’s get you hopeful again!

**Part 2: Hope Meets Lovey**

*Hope enters singing, “I’ve got the peace that passes understanding,” or another verse of “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy [Down in My Heart].” As she finishes the verse, she sees Lovey, who enters from the other side.*

HOPE: Hi Lovey! It’s so good to see you! How have you been?

LOVEY: I am well, thanks. I’m here at the PW Synod Gathering and having a great time! How about you?

HOPE: Me too! Joy convinced me last night to come and I’m so glad! I was losing, *no*, I’d *lost* my hope. I just didn’t know what to do. But being with Presbyterian Women has lifted my spirits and hearing from Carol Bechtel about the Bible study was amazing!

LOVEY: I agree! Doesn’t that Sabbath study sound *marvelous*?

HOPE: Yes, I can’t wait. Carol wrote in the introduction, “God wants to give us a gift. A gift that could change our lives.” Lovely.

LOVEY: I know! Sabbath is such an important part of our life in Christ.

HOPE: I’m so excited to take the study home and get together with PW there. Our PW group fell apart a bit during the pandemic—just one of the many reasons my hope felt far away, I guess. But I’m getting a PW group together and we can talk about our practice of Sabbath!

LOVEY: Shabbat Shalom! Healing, wholeness and peace for all.

HOPE: Yes please. That’s exactly what I need.

LOVEY: We all need that! The study says that burnout is when you get overwhelmed emotionally and can’t keep up with life’s incessant demands. I think we all feel that, at least occasionally.

HOPE: Exactly. But Jesus says, “Come to me all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest!”

LOVEY: Thanks be! Too often we forget that promise. Hope is being able to see that there is light, despite the darkness.

HOPE: Yes! I love the way Poet Amanda Gorman says it: “For there is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it, if only we’re brave enough to be it.”2

LOVEY: Isn’t that one of the joys of PW? We help each other see the light. And PW encourage us to BE Christ’s light in the world.

HOPE: May it be so!

*(They exit singing “I’ve got the peace that passes understanding,” or another verse of “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy [Down in My Heart].”)*

**Part 3: Hope Renewed**

(*Joy, Lovey and Hope move to center stage and address the audience.)*

JOY and LOVEY: Hope’s hope has been renewed! How about yours?

JOY: The gathering planning team *hopes* you have experienced some renewal at this Gathering.

LOVEY: As children of God, our hope is found in Jesus Christ.

HOPE: I was reminded at this Gathering that Presbyterian Women reminds me of this hope and offers me renewal and community.

JOY: I was reminded that the PW Purpose helps us live out our faith in that hope in Jesus Christ.

LOVEY: Would you join us in affirming the PW Purpose?

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we **commit ourselves**

* **to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,**
* **to support the mission of the church worldwide,**
* **to work for justice and peace, and**
* **to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom.**

HOPE: Remember Pastor Susan Sparks’ Ten Commandments of JOY?3

JOY: Thou shalt not worry.

LOVEY: Thou shalt not let anger steal your joy.

HOPE: Thou shalt believe you deserve joy.

JOY: Thou shalt laugh with God.

LOVEY: Thou shalt pray it and say it: I’m Grateful!

HOPE: Thou shalt laugh with your neighbor—even if your neighbor is a telemarketer.

JOY: Thou shalt laugh and eat chocolate and chili peppers.

LOVEY: Thou shalt be like the little children.

HOPE: Thou shalt lean on laughter in times of trouble.

JOY, LOVEY and HOPE: Thou shalt not waste ANY opportunities for joy.

JOY: To paraphrase humorist Erma Bombeck: Think of all the women on the Titanic, who, on that fateful night, said ‘no’ to dessert. It’s easy to postpone joy in times of crisis or pain, but time keeps ticking. No matter where we find ourselves in life, it’s still life. It’s still a gift. And we must honor that gift in all we do.

LOVEY: God has given us life abundant. Let us not waste it!

JOY: Hoping and praying—these are the marks of our lives as children of God.

JOY, LOVEY and HOPE: Afterall, we are Presbyterian Women.

HOPE: Yes! [*to audience*] Repeat after me:

I am a Child of God.

[*pause for response*]

I am loved and precious.

[*pause for response*]

I am a Presbyterian Women.

[*pause for response*]

 I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

LOVEY: Friends,

JOY: Let us accept “God’s gift of rest and delight.”

HOPE: Let us go and live hope-filled, abundant lives!

*Leaders invite everyone to sing additional adapted verses with motions.*

 *I’ve got peace like a river . . . .*

 *I’ve got joy like an ocean . . . .*

 *I’ve got hope like a fountain . . . .*

**Notes**

1. “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy,” words and music by George Willis Cooke.
2. Amanda Gorman, “The Hill We Climb” (An Inaugural Poem for the Country,” March 30, 2021 (New York: Viking, 2021).
3. Susan Sparks, “The Ten Commandments of Joy,” November 25, 2020; [susansparks.com/blog/the-ten-commandments-of-joy](http://susansparks.com/blog/the-ten-commandments-of-joy).