

# *With Strength and Joy*

May 29, 2017

The Lincoln Center, New York  
From Bonsack Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia

*God has blessed you with a wonderful talent. I am so pleased I was able to share in this project, both as a part of the commissioning and as a musician. Keep up the great work!*

– Rita Philpott –

*It was a pleasure to hear the premiere of Psalm 23 at the Lincoln Center. The sound of the full orchestra and choir filled the hall with beautiful music. Thank you for inviting the Bonsack choir as participants in the concert!*

– Hannah Whitenack –

*My first time at the Lincoln Center and it was great! Thank you so much for the opportunity to sing your music...I truly enjoyed it all (I also enjoyed all the comedy in the rehearsals!).*

– Carl Whitenack –

*It was a wonderful experience to be in New York and to have the opportunity to perform your music under your direction. The music and message took on a deeper meaning. It was thrilling to sing it at Lincoln Center!*

– Paulette Recktenwald –

*What a joy it has been to have had a small collaborative role in Psalm 23, from supporting its spark of creation in your mind to seeing it culminate in performances at Lincoln Center. The words and music speak to me on many levels and I so appreciate your artistry. Blessings to you as you continue to build the Lord's reputation.*

– Lee Jones –

*This experience singing Psalm 23 and hearing your thoughts about each song has been a special blessing beyond what I expected. Your obvious desire for the work to minister to us and to those who will hear it spoke to where your heart was when you wrote it and your love of scripture. Singing on Monday with the full orchestra was an experience I'll not forget. As an added reflection, please thank your wife for insisting on interesting alto parts... there are many and I particularly enjoyed singing them.*

– Margaret Toone –

*Thank you for the gift of the music! Over this last year of learning and singing Psalm 23, I have come to love it so much. Singing these songs speak in a new and fresh way each time. Your direction and talents, as well your great humor, are so appreciated.*

– Linda Loope –

*Thank you for the opportunity to present these comforting words to so many people;  
I hope our audience was as inspired by your work as we were.*

– Elizabeth Henderson –

*After visiting the 9/11 Memorial on Saturday morning, I found such reassurance and comfort  
in your music. You Comfort Me has and still does touch me deeply each time I sing it.*

– Tammy Kelly –

*It is difficult to put into words how I felt during the experience of singing Psalm 23  
at the Lincoln Center. You told us to make it a spiritual experience and it truly was a magnificent  
spiritual experience! Thank you for composing such beautiful and meaningful music.*

– Pamela Moreland –

*Following the rehearsal at the Lincoln Center, I didn't tell you the whole story about my Mother.  
We lost my father in 2008, but mom still had the comfort of her beloved cat. She moved in with me  
in 2011 and the cat came, too. Mom turned 89 on May 10<sup>th</sup> this year. She had to put her cat to  
sleep on May 13<sup>th</sup>, the day before Mother's Day. When I left the house on Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup>,  
she was truly without another physical presence in the house. Mom came to the Bonsack Baptist  
presentation of Psalm 23 and said that We Are Not Alone was such a comfort to her  
and brought her peace. When I called her everyday from New York to check on her,  
she would say that it was lonely without me but that song kept running through  
her mind and reminding her that she wasn't alone.*

– Andrea Greene –

*Thank you for giving us music which thrills and nourishes our soul.  
It has been a spiritual blessing to sing your compositions. May God continue to bless you  
so that your music can continue to bless others.*

– Nancy Parr –

*Thanks so much for writing this work. It has brought the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm to life for me  
in a way that I have not experienced before.*

– Bruce Henderson –

*Thank you for treating us with such dignity and respect. Thank you for the voice lessons and  
for your constant encouragement. I was honored to be in your choir this weekend.*

– Helen Mast –

*Words can't express my gratitude for the opportunity to accompany the choir! The rehearsals were  
fun and I loved the feeling of collaboration as we worked toward a common goal: creating moving mu-  
sic for God's glory. I'll cherish these memories! Thank you for your generous spirit. You made me feel  
part of a team and allowed me to enjoy every moment. My cup runneth over with blessings!*

– Vicky Elliott –

*Thank you for the wonderful opportunity of singing in NYC—a city we prayed would be impacted by the words you so beautifully set to music. In fact, as we met people from all over the US, we tried to imagine the impact of your work all over the country. During the total silence in Tho I Walk Through the Valley—which was so artistic and well-planned—the quiet was almost deafening. So many of the songs were “my favorite” and I knew it was the message I needed; I’m sure many others felt the same way. Thank you and may God continue to use your talents in a powerful way.*

– Sallie VanLear –

*Thank you for the powerful reminder that we are not alone and that it is a choice to allow our Savior to be our Shepherd, to be restored, and to be comforted. We so appreciated the opportunity to join with other choirs to sing such fabulous music.*

– Susan Plenge –

*Psalm 23 was a great experience and you were so sensitive to the subtext of the Psalm. You composed a work that truly ministers to those in the various phases of their spiritual journey.*

– Kathy Greer –

*What a privilege, honor, and all-inspiring experience! I lost my brother several weeks ago—which was exceptionally difficult—and singing your spiritually based and meaningful work meant more to me than you will ever know. Every song brought me great comfort. Thank you for allowing God to use you in this way.*

– Nancy Stewart –

*Thank you so much for writing this beautiful music that is so...well, there is really not a good, single word to describe it. It touches the deepest parts of us. It gives expression to our sorrows and to our precious Father who tenderly cares for us in the midst of them. I celebrate God’s continuous and very personal presence with us in and through all of our lives (We are not alone!).*

*It was a joy to watch your facial expression as you conducted. You drew us all into a collective experience of ministering and worship that was almost overwhelming. I was spent at its conclusion.*

*God bless you as you continue to write His music. Deuteronomy 4:37–39 comes to mind as an appropriate reference...I am in tears of gratitude as I conclude this experience.*

– Charlotte Creasy –

*What a spiritual and meaningful experience this weekend has been! Psalm 23 provided me with a deeper understanding of our walk with Christ in times of trouble. The strength He provides during our times of grief was revealed to me in the lyrics and dramatic music. Thank you so much for sharing your talent with us and affording us this unforgettable and moving experience.*

– Janet McCarter –

*Thanks so much for our wonderful concert at Lincoln Center last night.  
You made the experience so incredibly special.*

– Tressia Detrick –

*Thanks so much for the powerful and timeless work of art you have created. Every song is a masterpiece, and I loved singing every one for different reasons! My sister asked If I was nervous before the performance, and I told her, "No", I was feeling strong emotions about what Psalm 23 meant to me. Tears of joy and affirmation came to my eyes many times while singing. Thanks again for the great music and the opportunity to make a joyful noise to the Lord!*

– Glenn Brammer –

*It was a very special adventure for our choir to have a part in the creation of Psalm 23–A Journey with the Shepherd, and to culminate the experience with such a stirring performance with you in New York. Thank you for your accessibility to those of us in the local church choir loft—it was an opportunity we will not forget.*

– Barry Green –