

# *Three Psalms of Refuge*

**SATB** with optional solos  
Piano accompaniment

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These “three psalms of refuge” came toward the end of a year of grieving. The words of these psalms held me in strong arms and then nudged me on to a triptych all within a few days. They may be performed as a group or individually. After wrestling with key traditions I decided that Psalm 46 sounds best in it’s original key. If this is too high for your choir I can easily send you a transposition down to B minor (relative minor key to the other two pieces) but I feel like it loses some of its vigor in that key.

**Psalm 16** can be used with congregational response. Use the first 8 measures to teach the response before performing the entire piece. In effect then, you may want to use a repeat sign at measure 8. The conductor would then cue the congregation to enter on the responses.

I have suggested in the music that soloists or choir sections could be used for the verses.

The verses are as follows: verse 1- medium voice (any choir section)

verse 2 – high voice (sopranos or tenors)

verse 3 – low voice (altos or basses)

verse 4 – soprano

verse 5 high voice (sopranos or tenors)

Watch that enough voices are always on the main tune in the response to help the congregation, especially the final response with soprano descant. Depending on your choir size you may want a few altos to sing the main tune with the second sopranos.

**Psalm 46** mainly features a contrast between the turbulent “A” section and the legato “B” section. I think a soloist would best suit that contrast, but you could put all women on one solo and all men on the other.

**Psalm 59** is actually only two verses from the psalm. For me the words “unfailing love” gave the piece and in fact the triptych it’s final peace and refuge. I did not place any dynamic markings in this piece intentionally. I believe the phrases suggest crescendo and decrescendo already. I also believe that the piece can be used as a loud or quiet conclusion to the triptych so I leave that decision here to the director.

This Psalm can be performed as is, but also works as an a cappella piece or as a vocal solo (using the soprano line) with accompaniment.