S T E P H E N B A R K E R

## I have called you by name



But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, he who formed you: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you.

Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
I will say to the north, 'Give them up',
and to the south, 'Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of the earth—

everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.'

Selected verses from the beginning of Isaiah 43 (NRSV)

## Composer's notes

This piece is a celebration, and a personal thanksgiving for the gift of my son who was conceived through IVF, a journey that anyone who has been through it knows has many ups and downs. Our first round didn't work, and it was during the period after this that St Stephen's Choir, under my direction, were singing the services at St Alban's Cathedral. The Old Testament reading at one services was the opening of Isaiah 43, from which the text for this anthem was selected; the words spoke to both myself and my wife Sophie, and we came back to them regularly as we went through a second round. To our delight we were blessed with Oscar. Musically, this anthem is a meditation on those words and our journey, with elements of creation in the opening section, moments of calm reassurance, culminating in jubilant praise.

Stephen Barker

Fordwich, Canterbury, UK

September 2024

*I have called you by name* was first performed on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024 in St Stephen's Church, Canterbury by the church choir, at the Baptism of Oscar, my son.

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