Richard St. Clair

The Medford Hymn Book

A Year of Hymns for Chorus

January - December 2023

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Foreword by the Composer

The Medford Hymn Book, named after the city I lived in while composing the music (viz. Medford, Massachusetts), is a collection of 215 four-part a cappella hymns in which the music (and in 130 cases the text as well) is by the present composer of this collection, assembled over most of the year 2023.

I became immersed in writing hymns in my own free harmonic style and sharing them with a dear old friend, Bill Harwood of Vermont in Christian fellowship with him, as he fought but ultimately lost his battle with an atypical cancer late in 2023. I felt a special kinship in these hymns with Bill, through my almost daily hymns for which he always kindly expressed appreciation. It was a special bond I'll never forget. one that could not have happened without modern technology like email and music software, as we lived in two different cities in two different states.

I have discovered that I have a spiritual calling to compose musical hymns, in the stylistic way in which I have gone beyond the Bach principles of chorale writing and incorporated unorthodox, though singable, voice-leading and surprising musical moments. Thus the music owes its existence to the style blazoned by J. S. Bach, in his church cantatas, infused with a more contemporary approach to harmony and melody as well as tessitura, spacing and melody.

All solely to the glory of God!

Medford, Massachusetts, February 6, 2025

to the living memory of a dear friend,

William "Bill" Harwood

Back Cover

Richard St. Clair (b. 1946) was raised in a music-loving family who supported his early music studies in Grand Forks, North Dakota, his birth state. His first work for chorus was a "Lamb of God" which he wrote as a teenager. His doctoral studies at Harvard (Ph.D. 1978) only served to reinforce his determination to compose relevant and meaningful music for practicala musicians.

The Medford Hymn Book is music of inward spiritual prayer and revelation as well as open-hearted praise and worship of Christ Jesus and Almighty God through the Holy Spirit.

"St. Clair has created a fascinating sound world, both charged and atmospheric. His is a stirring and original voice."
—Lloyd Schwatz, *Boston Phoenix*

Let All the Earth Their Voices Raise
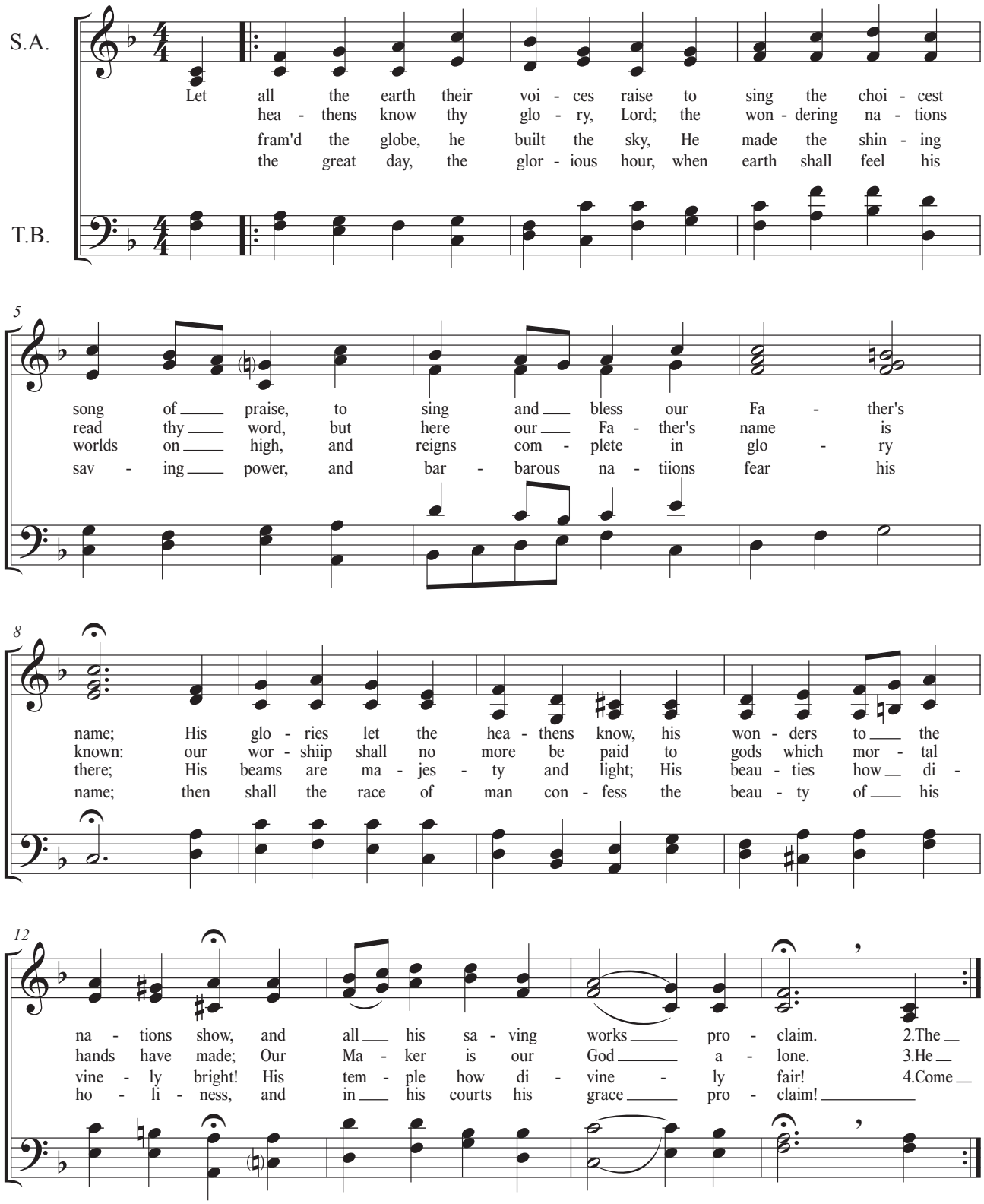
Dur.: 2'45"

Hymn 1

Isaac Watts (words)

Richard St. Clair, music
(25 Jan. 2023)

Steady ♩ = 92



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My God, my King
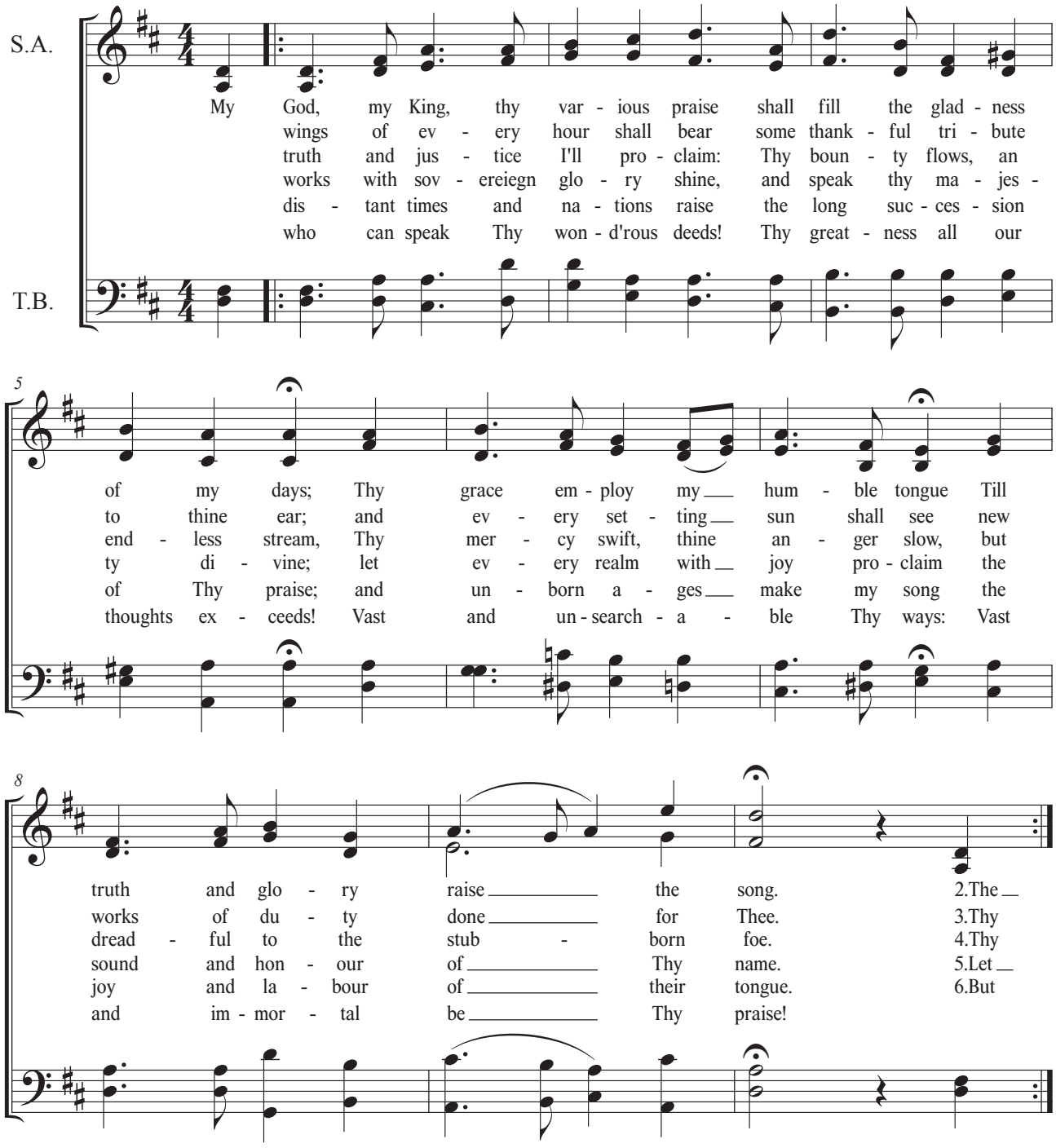
Dur.: 3'

Hymn 2

Isaac Watts, words

Richard St. Clair, music
(26 Jan. 2023)

Deliberate, not dragging ♩ = 84



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Our Father Reigns
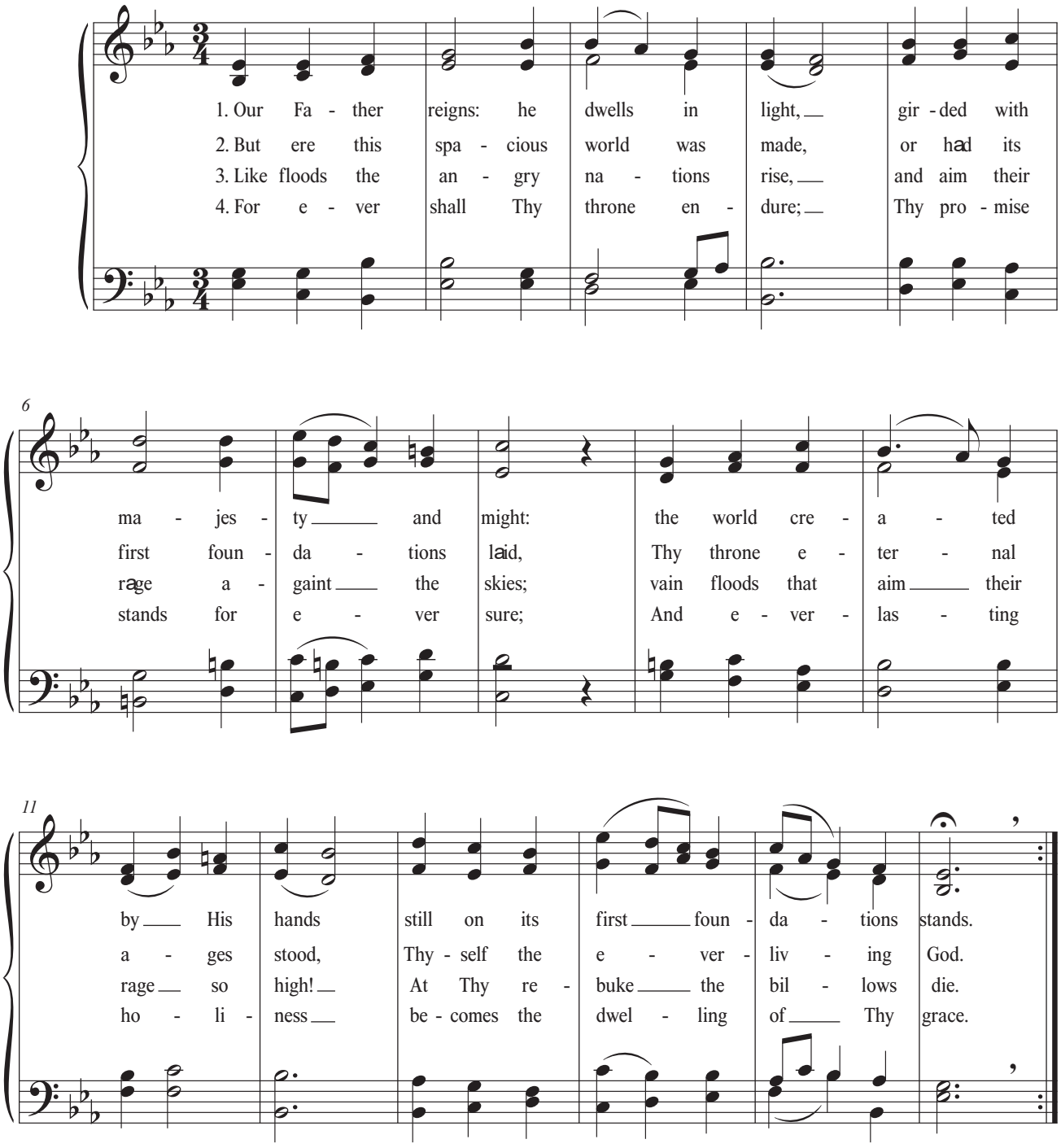
Hymn 3

Dur.: ca 2'

Isaac Watts, words

Richard St. Clair, music
(28 Jan. 2023)

Gently swinging $\mathbf{\mathit{d}.} = 36$



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The Lord of Glory Reigns
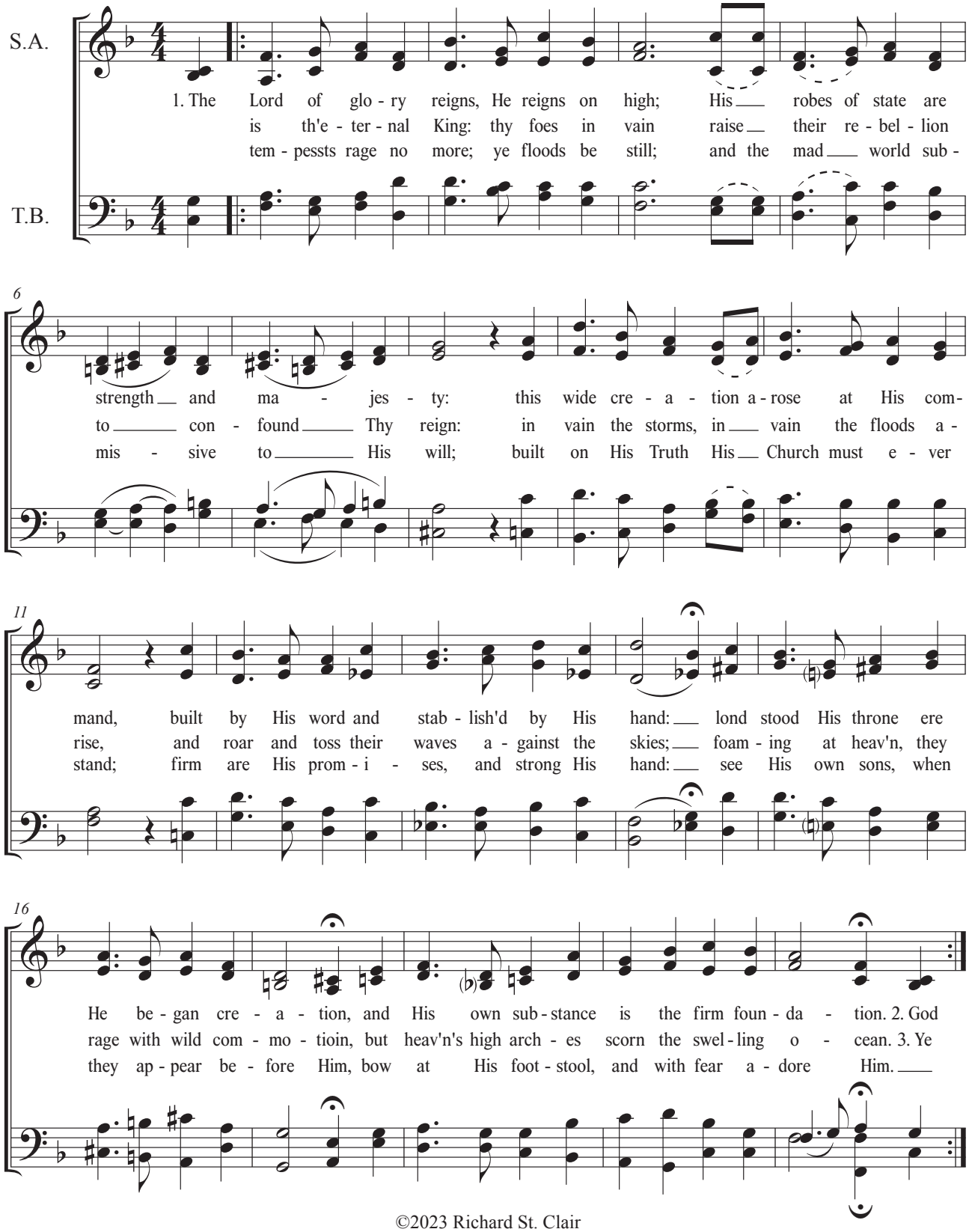
Dur.: ca 3'

Hymn 4

Isaac Watts, words

Richard St. Clair, music
(28 Jan. 2023)

Bright, joyful ♩ = 92



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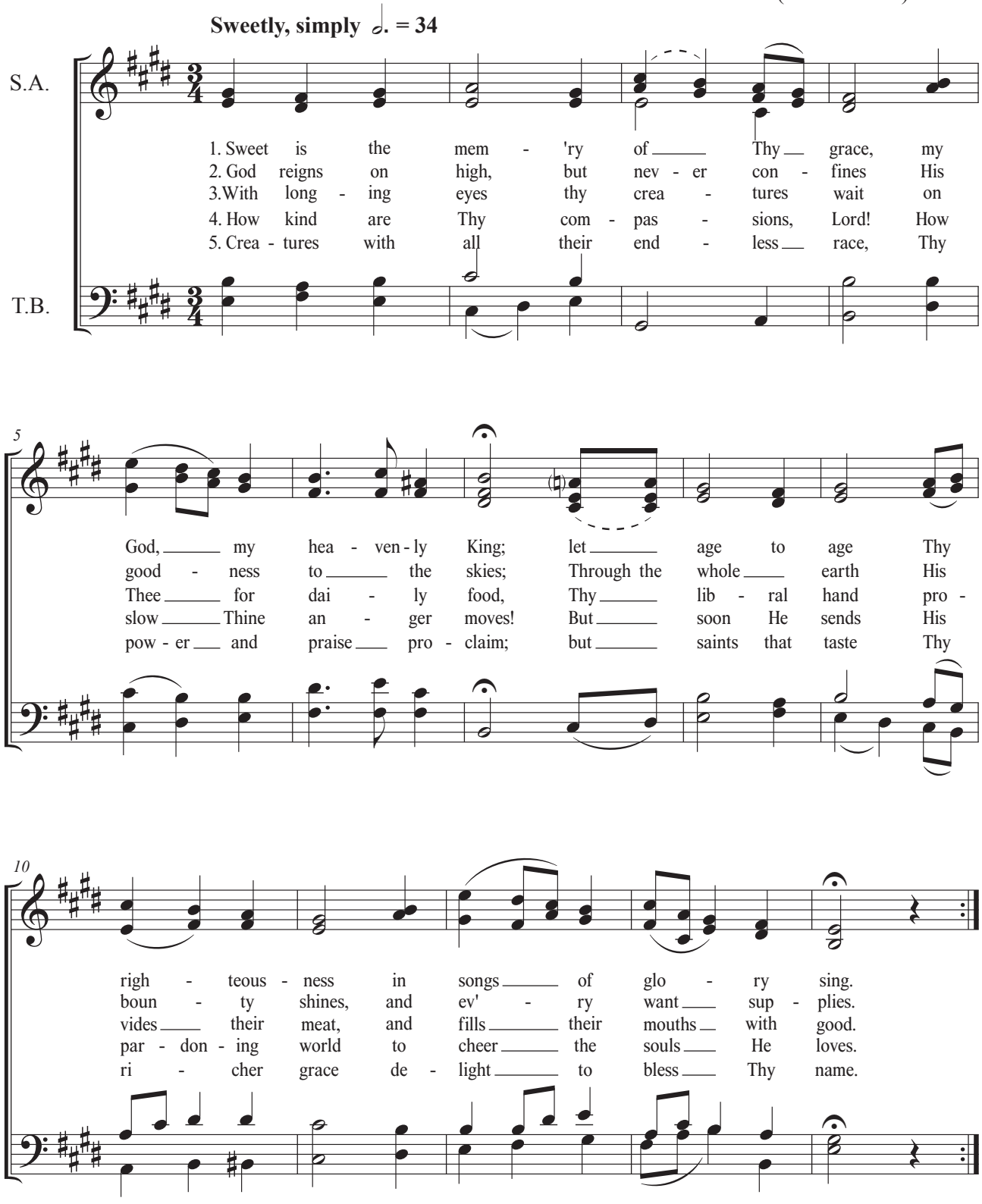
Sweet Is the Memory of Thy Grace

Dur.: ca 2'15"

Hymn 5

Isaac Watts, words
Based on Psalm 145

Richard St. Clair, mjusic
(30 Jan. 2023)



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How Wondrous Are Thy Ways
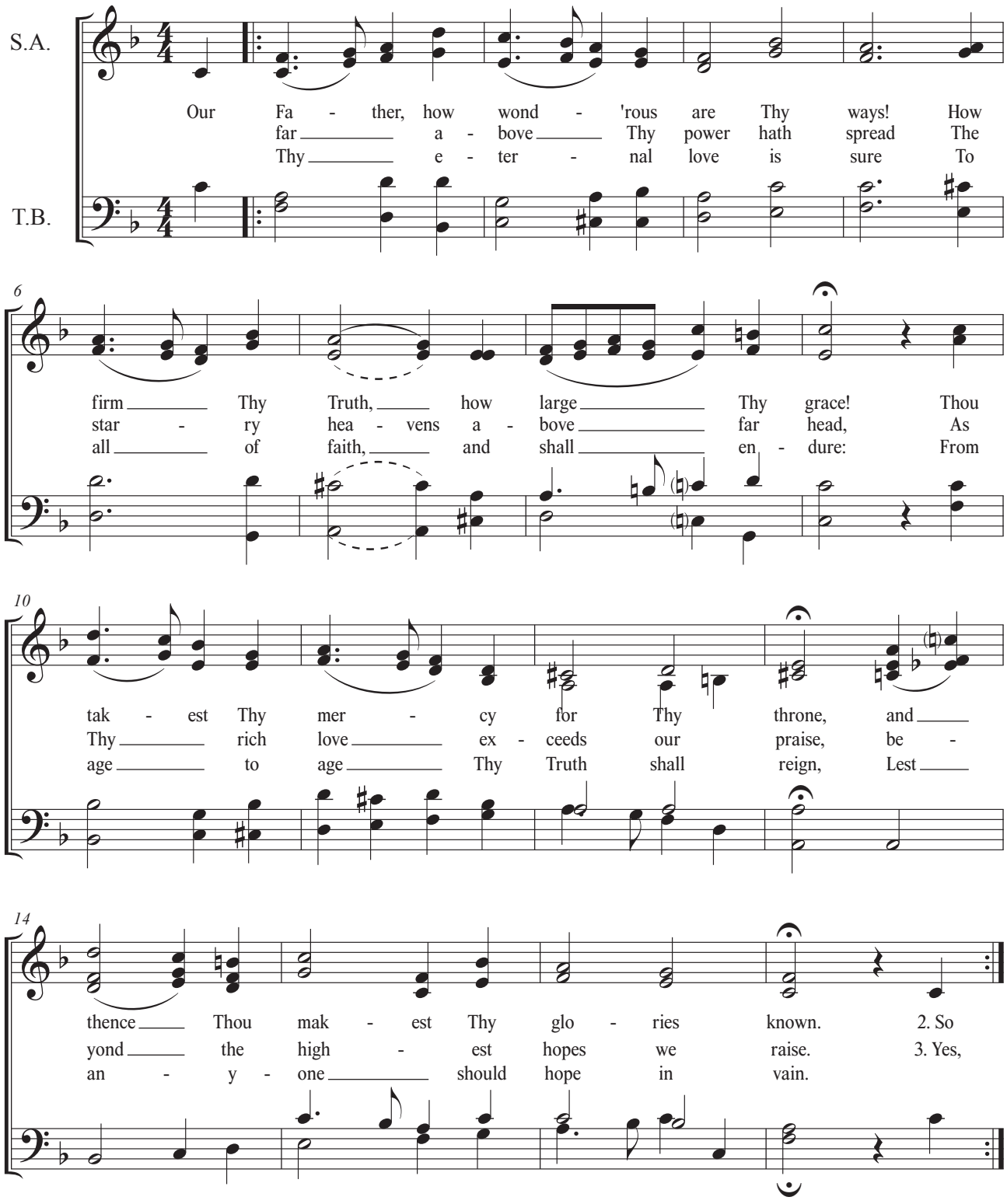
Dur.: ca 2'15"

Hymn 6

after Isaac Watts
& Ps.103(II)

Richard St. Clair, music
(31 Jan. 2023)

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)



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