

God of gardens

Carol Penner

God of gardens,
you are the great Cultivator,
growing faith for the ages.
You aren't picky about the size of the harvest.
You rejoice in the vast prairie field,
one crop from horizon to horizon,
just as you rejoice in the tiny plant
breaking through the inner city cement crack.
You carefully tend the tenderest of plants,
taking deep delight in burgeoning beauty.
Under the light of your gaze,
faith breaks out in different colours
and different stripes
all over the wide world.
You aren't threatened by new cultivars
that change through the generations;
you've grafted in new strains,
cross-breeding for hardiness and vigour.

We come on the scene,
eager gardeners,
anxious to work till kingdom come.
We long for and then write gardening manuals.
We outline what is acceptable and unacceptable,
and what should never be tolerated.
We come to work with books in hand,
ready to raise up something from nothing.
We're shocked and even a bit dismayed to find faith
growing wild and strong
even before we arrive.
We don't know what to make of this faith,

undomesticated by us.
You tour us around, smiling broadly,
remembering the lavish generosity
of those who planted so others could harvest.

Lord, we are the newly planted.
You are growing us all into good gardeners
and we look to you for inspiration.
Reveal to us the mystery of faith
in the eyes of a child,
wide with amazement
as the petal of each new day unfolds.
Reveal to us the work of faith
in the hands of our grandparents,
calloused from decades of labour.
Reveal to us the fundamentals of faith
in the harvest of righteousness
you are growing in the earth today.
Help us to see the harvest
not as something to be owned and controlled
but as something to be celebrated,
pressed down, shaken together, running over.
We ask all this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

About the author

Carol Penner is pastor of The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ontario. Her prayers and worship resources can be found on her blog, www.leadinginworship.com.