



Remembering Adisa

by Ruth Harder

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Read the original [here](#).*

It's been one year since I received news that my good friend's full-term pregnancy had ended in stillbirth. The news came as stark as the days that would follow. First, came a request for prayers, and next came the devastating news: "Adisa Baraka didn't make it." Then came the concern that my friend had lost a dangerous amount blood during the delivery. More prayers were requested.



Adisa Baraka, names that mean, "The clear one or foresight" and "blessing," had not made it. Now we worried that his mother would experience the same fate. Nothing about this seemed clear or blessed. All we could do was be the best circle of friends we could be—and even that felt dreadfully inadequate and full of potential missteps.

I watched as friends and family from near and far gathered around, forming a womb-like environment for my friend, helping her to begin the process of physical and emotional mending—mending that continues to this day. We showered her with food and drinks, plants, candles, oils, and gifts of all kinds. We went on walks, wrote poems, and sat in silence together, wiping the tears from our eyes. And we planted a red Japanese Maple tree together in honor of Adisa Baraka Osayande-Taylor.

It is this tree that beckoned me on a recent Sunday evening. I was at the church figuring out what to do with the leftover communion juice from the morning service. It is my custom to pour out the leftovers somewhere outside as a practice of extending the table into the world, and returning the gifts back to creation from whence they came. As soon as I saw the chalices full of leftover communion juice on my desk, I knew immediately where I would go — Adisa's tree.



This property where we planted Adisa's tree will soon become an orchard-planting site. We hope that fruits of all kinds will grow over the next decade, with Adisa's tree in the middle, and with the fruit ending up in the mouths of neighborhood/area children who come to our church for summer educational programming. And so as I poured the leftover juice around the base of the tree, I thought of Jesus, The Great Vine, The Blessed, Clear One, who promises that we are not alone, and that fruit can be found and grown, even in the face of devastating loss. We are called to be stewards of this blessing and promise.



And so with the little juice I had left, I walked around the soon-to-be-orchard, and with tears sprinkled in with the juice I prayed: *Fruit of the womb, fruit of the earth, receive this offering, and bless all who will tend and receive from this fertile land past, present, and future.*

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