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Friends, family, and all who loved Jon—thank you for being here today.

My name is his wife, his partner of 27 years, and his best friend through every season.
I wish I were holding his hand instead of this paper.
But I can still hear his voice saying, “Take your time. Breathe. I’m right here.”

Jon—Jonathan Michael Reed—was born on March 3, 1968.
He left us on January 10, 2026, at 57.
It still feels impossible to say that out loud.

He grew up in Ohio, in a house where tools had a place and promises were kept.
He studied mechanical engineering because he liked understanding why things worked—and how to make them better.
That was Jon in a sentence: improve what you touch, and leave it sturdier than you found it.

We moved to North Carolina to start a family and, as he put it, “build something with more soul than spreadsheets.”
He built a small manufacturing business from late nights and honest work.
And when it was thriving, he did the thing that surprised exactly no one who knew his heart—he sold it so he could spend more time at home.
He said, “What’s the point of success if I miss the best parts?”
The best parts were us—our two kids, Olivia and Marcus.
His sister Rachel, who could always make him laugh when the rest of us had tried and failed.
His three nieces, to whom he taught the sacred art of the overbuilt birdhouse.
And a neighborhood that somehow turned into a family.

If you knew Jon, you knew steady.

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He was patient in ways that made the rest of us exhale.
Generous with his time in ways that made schedules bend around what mattered.
He had a quick wit that arrived exactly when the room needed it.
And when something went wrong—and life always arranges a few wrong turns—he was the dependable center you could lean into.

I'll miss the reassuring hand he would place on my shoulder without saying a word.
It was his way of telling me, "I'm on your side. Always."
He could fix anything—furniture, bikes, leaky faucets.
More than that, he could fix bad days with calm and a smile, like a mechanic for tangled hearts.

He found peace in quiet prayer and Sunday services.
He didn't talk about faith much; he lived it.
In how he listened first.
In how he let the last piece of pie go to the kid who didn't ask for it but hoped.
In how humility sat on him like a well-worn jacket.

Some of our happiest moments were simple.
Weekend cycling, where he'd ring his bell like it was a joke the road was in on.
Woodworking in the garage, the floor sown with cedar curls and patience.
Coaching youth soccer, crouching to meet a child's eyes and make courage feel possible.
Grilling for neighbors, turning a cul-de-sac into a picnic, turning strangers into friends.

My favorite memory is a small one, which might be why it shines so brightly now.
A rainy-day road trip that turned into a detour off I-40.
We ducked into a tiny diner, drenched and starving.
Someone started humming along to the radio.
Soon we were singing—badly, off-key, not caring.

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We laughed until we cried, and even the cook sang a chorus from behind the pass.
The food was average, the coffee was terrible, and it felt like a perfect day.
That was Jon’s kind of magic: turning weather into a story and a meal into a memory.

As a father, he made room for our kids to grow into themselves.
He celebrated test scores and also the jokes that didn’t quite land.
He taught Olivia how to change a tire and set a boundary.
He taught Marcus how to file a hinge and say “I’m sorry” like you mean it.
He didn’t ask to be admired; he earned it in increments—rides to practice, late-night talks on the back steps, quiet notes stuck to the fridge.

He was also a brother who showed up at Rachel’s door with lightbulbs and a plan.
And an uncle who said yes to one more story, one more fix, one more goofy dance.

Jon left us a request, and I want to honor it here.
He asked that people remember him by mentoring someone who needs a chance.
Not a grand gesture. A consistent one.
A teenager who could use a steady voice.
A new hire who could use a patient teacher.
A neighbor who could use a hand and not a headline.
If you’re wondering what to do with your grief this month, that’s a place to start.

We are gathered at a funeral, but Jon would not want his life cut down to one hard sentence.
He would want us to see the long line of days he lived fully.
The cycling routes mapped and remapped.
The bunk bed he measured twice and still had to rebuild—he told that story more than once, with pride and a grin.
The Sunday prayers said softly, and the way he would squeeze my hand on

“amen.”

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To Olivia and Marcus:
Your dad loved you with a depth that made him brave.
He believed in you out loud.
He was proud—fiercely, gently, daily.
You are not alone; his love is built into you the way his shelves were built into our walls—solid, painted with care, meant to hold good things.

To Rachel and to our nieces:
He adored being your steady person.
Keep telling his stories.
They do not end today.

And to everyone here:
Thank you for standing with us, for sharing the small memories that feel suddenly enormous.
The texts about a bike he tuned.
The picture of a grill night that turned into a block party.
The silence you’ve kept when there weren’t words.
You have held us up.

Jon, my love—
I cannot promise to be as steady as you.
But I can promise to keep the porch light on, to finish the projects you started, and to carry your patience into rooms that need it.
I will keep singing off-key when the rain starts.
I will try to fix what I can, and smile when I can’t.

We release you into the love that shaped your days.
We give thanks for the years we had and the lessons that remain.
And we will honor you in the way you asked:
by reaching back a hand to someone who needs a chance,
by choosing kindness first,

and by building our lives so they can bear the weight of each other’s hearts.

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Thank you, Jon, for all of it.
We miss you.
We love you.
We’ll keep going—together—just like you taught us.

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