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Family, friends, neighbours, colleagues — thank you for being here today.

I’m standing here as Trish’s daughter, Sarah-Jane,
missing my mum,
my anchor and gentle guide,
and feeling grateful that so many of you loved her too.

Mum was born on 3 May 1959 in Durban,
grew up in Durban North,
and learned early what it meant to start each day with purpose.
She trained as a nurse at Addington Hospital,
and in the 1980s she packed her bags and moved to Johannesburg.
It was meant to be a few years.
It became 35 years of public clinics, community outreach,
and a reputation for calm strength when days were long and rooms were full.

She married Dad — Peter — and for 38 years they walked side by side.
She raised my brother Luke and me
with the same steady hands she brought to her patients.
She became “Gran” to Ava and Jamie,
a title she wore with a quiet pride that showed up in practical ways:
knitting tiny beanies for NICU babies,
arriving with snacks precisely when you didn’t know you needed them,
and keeping the kettle just on the brink of boiling,
as if tea could solve most things — and in her world, it often did.

Trish was patient and practical, quietly brave,
with that dry sense of humour that landed softly and perfectly.
If you came to our house,
the door was never just open — it was welcoming.

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Shoes off, sit down, here’s a mug,
tell me properly, don’t skip the hard bits.
She believed in kindness without fuss,
service to others, honesty,
and that everyone deserves dignity and a fair chance.
That wasn’t a slogan for her.
It was how she greeted people,
how she filled in forms for a mother who didn’t know where to start,
how she phoned back when she said she would.

Her work was maternal care,
but the truth is, her whole life was maternal care.
She had a knack for making hard news easier to carry.
Not by pretending it wasn’t heavy,
but by standing next to you while you caught your breath.
If you ever left Mum with a problem still at full volume,
it was only because you refused the tea.

My favourite memory?
Sunday drives to the Midlands Meander.
The car became a small choir — slightly off-key, fully committed —
windows a little down,
farm stalls promised just up the road,
and always an ending of tea and her famous lemon squares.
To this day, if I hear an old song on a Sunday,
I can taste citrus and sunshine, and feel my shoulders drop.

She loved gardening indigenous plants,
knew which aloes the sun would scorch and which it would bless,
and could coax a stubborn seedling the way she coaxed anxious patients —
gently, with time, with a joke to cut the tension.
She baked milk tart with a cinnamon top that somehow never cracked.
She took early-morning walks before most of us remembered our names,
and when winter rolled in,

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she rallied church friends for blanket drives,
counting not just the blankets,
but the stories of the hands that would hold them.

At home, she and Dad were a pair built on small, faithful habits:
a note on the counter,
a lift given without asking,
a shared look that said “we’ve got this” when the day didn’t go to plan.
To Carol and Stephen — her sister and brother —
she was the steady middle,
the one who could tease and tell the truth in the same sentence,
and have you laughing while you listened.

We will miss her hugs — proper ones, the two-armed kind.
We will miss walking into her kitchen to find the kettle already murmuring.
We will miss how she could take a piece of bad news,
straighten it a little,
and place it somewhere we could carry it.

Mum passed away peacefully at 64.
Peaceful — a word I don’t use lightly.
She earned that peace with a life of service,
the quiet bravery of showing up,
day after day, person after person,
without making a fuss.

Today, we honour her by telling the truth of who she was.
Not a saint on a pedestal,
but Trish — sleeves rolled up,
dry wit ready,
stubborn about fairness,
and soft enough to hold what was fragile.

If you’re looking for what to do with the ache,

here’s what she would say, in her way:
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Put the kettle on.
Check on someone who won’t ask.
Bring an extra blanket.
Plant something indigenous and watch it take root.
Walk at sunrise and greet the morning properly.
And when you feel overwhelmed,
break the job into smaller pieces,
then start with the first piece.

In lieu of flowers, Mum asked that we support a local mothers-and-babies fund.
It’s exactly like her to trade bouquets for beanies and formula.
And when the time comes,
we’ll scatter her ashes near Umhlanga,
where she loved to watch the sun lift itself over the water.
If you find yourself there one day,
take a breath,
listen for the first notes of morning,
and know that a part of her is in that faithful light.

To Dad, Peter —
thank you for loving her the way you did.
To Luke —
she was proud of your grit and your heart.
To Ava and Jamie —
Gran’s hands are still in the beanies she made,
in the lemon squares we’ll bake together,
in the way we will show up for you.
To Carol and Stephen —
family was not a theory to her; it was a table with extra chairs.

Mum, you were our compass.
You taught us that kindness doesn’t need a stage,
that humour can defuse fear,

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and that dignity is given not because it’s earned,
but because it’s owed to every person we meet.

We will carry you in how we make tea,
how we listen before we speak,
how we keep a door open,
and how we choose to be brave,
quietly and consistently,
when no one is watching.

Thank you, Trish — Mum — for the steadiness,
for the songs on Sundays,
for the lemon and the light,
for every small mercy that turned out not to be small at all.

We love you.
Go gentle into the dawn you loved.
We’ll meet you there — with blankets to share, a garden to tend,
and the kettle already on.

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