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

We've gathered to say goodbye to my brother, Liam Peter Jacobs—our Lee—
and to hold close the life he lived, the love he gave,
and the steadiness he brought into every room he entered.

Lee was born on 14 March 1986 in Durban,
the son of Robert and Elaine, big brother to me, Megan,
later husband to Candice,
and the proudest dad to Ethan and Ava.

He left us on 2 April 2026, at forty,
after a short illness.
We're still catching our breath.
But even in these few days,
the stories have poured in—simple, grounded memories—
and it's clear what Lee left behind:
not speeches, not show,
but a way of being that made people feel safe.

We grew up in Durban North.
He was the big brother who knew the route to everything,
from the best bakery rolls to the quickest school lift.
Northwood shaped him;
so did the choice he made after matric—
to learn a trade, properly, from the ground up.
He completed his electrical apprenticeship with pride,
and that pride never hardened into ego.
It softened into patience,
especially with the new guys who didn't yet know a breaker from a busbar.

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He moved to Johannesburg for work,
became a site supervisor in Randburg,
and somehow managed to be both the calm in the chaos
and the oke who made the chaos laugh.
Dry humour, steady hands.
If a deadline was looming,
you wanted Lee on the radio.
If a mistake was made,
you wanted Lee to find it—quietly, without fuss—
and show you how to fix it,
so you didn’t make it twice.

He met and married his varsity sweetheart, Candice.
There are a hundred small snapshots of them—
Saturday errands that turned into braais,
late-night giggles over admin that never ends,
two car seats, two snacks, three lists.
And then Ethan arrived.
And then Ava.
He didn’t say “family first” often.
He just moved through the world as if that was the only way to walk.

For Lee, loyalty wasn’t loud.
It arrived early,
with a thermos, a crescent wrench, and a plan.
He was the first to pitch up when something needed fixing,
the guy who kept a toolbox in the boot
“just in case”.
Sometimes that “case” was a dodgy gate motor.
Sometimes it was a conversation no one knew how to start.
Either way, he was there.

He loved the simple South African things that somehow never feel simple

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when they’re done with heart.
Early Durban surf before the wind got up.
Weekend braais that carried on long after the coals had gone grey.
Watching the Sharks, and the Springboks,
giving good-natured grief when the ref missed something obvious.
DIY projects that began with, “It’s just four screws,”
and ended with Ethan in a tiny hard hat
and Ava handing out cable ties like confetti.

He believed in hard work, honesty,
and helping neighbours without keeping score.
He believed that safety standards weren’t red tape;
they were the line between going home and not,
and he took that seriously.
I’ve heard from so many apprentices this week—
the ones he mentored—
and you’ve told me about the time he took to teach you,
to make sure you understood the why, not just the what.
To all of you:
thank you for loving him back.
Your messages have meant more than you know.

As his sister, my stories are stitched with lifts and late-night calls.
He ferried me to primary school with music too loud for that hour
and a running commentary on Durban traffic as if he ran it.
Years later, he’d answer at 11pm:
“Alright, Megs. Talk me through it.”
He never pretended to have all the answers.
He asked good questions.
His voice notes—calm, a bit dry, two jokes tucked in—
could land like a hand on your shoulder.
We will miss that sound.

My favourite memory?

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Our Garden Route road trip.
Rain in Wilderness, coming down sideways.
I said, “Let’s just eat inside.”
He said, “No man, watch.”
He set up a braai under a questionable tarp,
coaxed a reluctant fire into life,
and made the best boerie rolls of the whole trip.
Sauce on the wrist, steam on our faces, thunder in the distance.
That was Lee:
make a plan, make it work,
and make sure everyone’s fed.

He was steady, practical, funny in that dry way
that sneaks up on you and leaves you grinning.
And fiercely loyal.
He didn’t broadcast grand principles.
He lived them, quietly.
Family first.
Work hard.
Be honest.
Help your neighbour and don’t write it down.

To Mom and Dad—Robert and Elaine—
your son carried your values into every place he went.
You gave him roots strong enough to travel
and a compass that never lost north.
To Candice—his partner in the everyday—
thank you for the love that gave his life its brightest shape.
To Ethan and Ava—
your dad’s love for you is the kind that doesn’t run out.
It’s in the way you ask “why” twice,
in your courage to try,
in your giggles on a couch he fixed three times.
He is in you, and around you, every day.

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To the Netcare staff who cared for him in his final days—
our deepest thanks.
Your hands were gentle, your words clear, your care real.
And to Lee’s mentees who have shown up with stories, flowers, and offers to help—
you have honoured him the way he honoured you.

Today hurts.
There’s the big silence,
and then all the small ones:
the Saturday call that won’t come,
the half-done project in the garage,
the Sharks game without his commentary.
But grief is another way of telling the truth about love.
And love, with Lee, was practical and brave.
It shows up.
It holds the ladder.
It leaves the place better than it found it.

If you want to carry him forward, do what he did.
Pitch up early.
Listen properly.
Share what you know.
Keep a small toolbox—literal or not—close by.
And when the rain starts at Wilderness,
don’t cancel the braai.
Shift the tarp, spark the fire,
and feed your people.

Lee,
my big brother,
thank you for the lifts, the lessons, the late-night “Alright, Megs.”
Thank you for showing us that strength can be quiet,

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and that safety—of a site, of a family, of a heart—
is built one careful choice at a time.

We’ll look after each other.
We’ll look after Candice, and Ethan, and Ava.
And we’ll remember you not as a headline date,
but as a laugh in the kitchen,
a steady hand on a shoulder,
and a warm boerie roll in a storm.

Go easy, Lee.
We’ve got it from here.
And we’ll keep making a plan—
just like you taught us.

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