



It's that time of year again. I really don't know how to write this letter this year. I want to say it is going to be a wonderful new year and that 2023 was okay, but it's really hard to be positive when your heart is broken. As most of you already know, Fred went home to be with our Lord and Savior on August 12, 2023 at around 10 AM. For several months before he went home, he was calling out to God to just take him home or heal him. He did not understand why he could no longer help around the house, or help others nor go to church or drive a car.

About a month before he went to the hospital for the last time, I was going into the kitchen, just as he was coming in from his walk (he loved to walk, he got down from walking around the block to just walking in our long circle driveway) he said, "I want a kiss." I was shock at first because he had said it in a demanding voice. I told him, "Okay!" then went over to kiss him and just as I leaned in to kiss him, he said, "I don't want one." I was shocked again, then he lifted his head up and laughed, "I fooled you, didn't I?" I said, "Yes" and we both laughed again, he spread his arms wide for a kiss and hug. That was our last hug and kiss. It was a couple of minutes of hugging and kisses. After that day it was me kissing him, I couldn't hug him because he said it hurts. He was complaining more and more about hurting.

We did 17 days of in-home hospice before he died. Each day the nurses would say he will not live much longer, today will be the day. It was hard for Dennis and me but I am so thankful we did it. I was reading a story to him for a couple of hours that Saturday morning. I didn't want him to die alone. The last two days I was spending more and more time with Fred, so he would not be alone. After I finished the book, I went over to see how he was doing and I knew he was gone. Instead of calling out to Dennis, I didn't want to scare Fred, I went into the hallway and called for Dennis to come quickly and I asked him "He is gone, isn't he?" "Yep, mom he is with God."

Dennis then called Circle of Life, they came quickly and took over notifying the authorities.

I was telling everyone that Fred died because he got tired of me reading to him and I would get a laugh from each person I told, but God told me a couple of days later that Fred went when he did because he knew I was in the room with him, he knew my voice and I was there. I felt much better after God spoke with me.

I want to thank each and every one that came to visit him, and the cards with the sweet message how Fred had affected your life. They were very precious to me. Fred would love to have known that his death allowed the Gideons to buy 371 Bibles to share with the lost. Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers this year. I love each and every one of you.

I am going to let Damon finish this up for me.

I'm not going to say much as I want this letter to be about remember dad. Mom and dad had 63 wonderful years together and thanks to the Air Force had 60 great Christmas' together. Not much has say about the rest of the family. Dennis is still at Walmart. Stell is having some medical issues that we're dealing with one day at a time. Chris and Emily are watching Audrey grow up way to fast. Andrew and CJ are doing well and Genesis is enjoying the fourth grade. Bradley met Annie earlier this year and things have progressed to them planning a wedding for April 20, 2024.

Merry Christmas to all and we wish you a Happy New Year.

Love,

Dot, Dennis, Damon, Stella, Chris, Emily, Audrey, Andrew, CJ, Genesis, Bradley, and Annie.

