

Give the Gift of
to those without a home
this Christmas.

Joy

Many of our Bashford Men's Shelter guests will not be celebrating this holiday season with family or friends. But you can share the love of God with them by creating a Gift of Joy bag!

Decorate a paper lunch bag and fill it with the following items:

Signed Christmas Card

Men's Manicure Set

Men's Wallet

Men's Underwear

(Please deliver separately out of bag.)

HRT Bus Pass OR \$10 Fast Food/Convenience Store Gift Card

(<https://gohrt.com/fares> // Please attach passes or gift cards to the outside of the bag.)



Bring your completed bags to our Donation Drop-off behind the Overton Building and UMM Thrift Store.

MONDAY-FRIDAY | 9 AM-5 PM | BY DECEMBER 20

If you would like to participate, please email us at volunteer@ummnorva.org.

Hope Begins with a Meal!

Though our Thanksgivings and Christmases might look a little different again this year, there is still much to celebrate. As we sit around our holiday tables with family or Zoom with distant friends, we will certainly give thanks for our many blessings.

But for our homeless neighbors, many of them in our shelters, these holidays are the times they feel most sad and lonely. You can provide a holiday meal—with all the fixings and the joy of celebrating with people who care—for just \$2.58 a meal. And the same is true every day of the year.

Give the Hope that Begins with a Meal!
unionmissionministries.org/donate



Hope

Begins with
a Meal!



The Union Mission has three great ways you can provide practical help for our hungry, homeless neighbors.

- 1 Pack bagged breakfasts or lunches for homeless neighbors housed in local hotels during the COVID pandemic.** Our goal is to distribute 300 of each meal every Friday for the foreseeable future.
- 2 Prepare or cater a full, pre-cooked meal for our shelter guests.** About 120 servings will cover one meal, and menus are available. Not a cook? Try catering. Our guests love most of the same restaurants you do.
- 3 Provide funds for either option.** Send us a check marked "Meals" in the memo line or use the online pulldown menu to select "Meals/Shelter" at donate.unionmissionministries.org.

To schedule your meal delivery, request our sample shopping lists, or just learn more, email volunteer@ummnorva.org.

Staff Needs

Immediate Impact – Eternal Rewards

The Union Mission Ministries is hiring in several departments. See current job openings or apply online at unionmissionministries.org/job-opportunities



5100 E. VIRGINIA BEACH BLVD.
NORFOLK, VA 23502
757-627-8686



The
UNION
MISSION

MISSION NETWORK

Food, Clothing, Shelter ... and so much more!

NOV/DEC 2021

**"As long as I'm here,
there's room for
growth."**

Details on page 3



INSIDE: Back Home Again | An Attitude of Gratitude
We're Hiring! | Give Like the Magi | Hope Begins with a Meal

An Attitude of Gratitude

We asked some of the people staying in our shelters what they were grateful for. In this season of thanks *and* giving, here's what they had to say about the help you make possible at The Union Mission.



Ronald

Bashford Men's Shelter Guest

"The Union Mission has really done a lot for me. They really cared about my sickness, in and out of the hospital. And the Wellness Team: oh my goodness! Those nurses are a true blessing! They are very, very good with [coordinating] all the medication I take every day. They are amazing ladies! I'm gonna miss them when I leave. And all the Men's Shelter Managers are great people: enthusiastic, warm, friendly! What has really amazed me is all their testimonies.... It really threw me for a loop that you can see people walking around here who don't look like they've been through anything. And I said, 'Wow! Look at how God can bless! If He can bless them, He can bless me!'"



Connie

Women's Shelter Guest

"I was so angry, I didn't want anything to do with God for a long time. I thankfully became homeless because I found this place—and they brought me back to God.... It's been so uplifting to be here. To hear the staff talk about God, they are smiles from ear to ear. It is so wonderful. You can't help but have some of it rub off on you. I learned so much about how I need to walk with Jesus."



David

RECLAIM Resident

"I did more drinking than I should and eventually that caught up with me at the job. So I was on my own, on the streets, living at hotels, spending up what little money I did have left.... I was at rock bottom in my life when I came here, but the intake manager told me, 'We don't judge. We help.' ... Ever since I've been here it's been nothing but help, help, help. I would have been in a much better situation if I had just come here earlier!"

Myesha

Women and Children's Shelter Guest

"The Mission is helping me to 'be still and know He is God.' The staff show me [to] put God first and foremost. It helps me be a better woman and role model."

Tacoreya

Age 7

Women and Children's Shelter Guest

"I learned about Jesus, the God. He died on the cross and came back to life."

Mia

Women's Shelter Guest

"They allowed me to stay in the shelter to get myself together, and while I'm here I will try my best to get all the help and all the services so that when I leave the shelter I will have the knowledge and understanding to live on my own and not have to come back. I'm ready to learn and listen."

*Some women's names are aliases as these shelter guests prefer to remain anonymous.

From Beantown to Better



Sometimes coming home isn't a homecoming. Darrell learned that when he returned to Norfolk after living in Boston for three decades.

In his youth, "my family was in chaos!" he says. His mother died when he was just three. His father, though loving, "was a full-fledged alcoholic," so Darrell and his siblings had to live with extended family for months at a time. "We had to put up with a lot of madness."

Though he grew up in church, Darrell "had to figure life out myself. I had to experience a lot of negative things from people, and I didn't have no one to talk to when things went bad."

Looking for stability after he graduated from high school, Darrell joined the Army. He served as a supply clerk for his 2 ½-year enlistment, but "it was not something that I wanted to do all my life." But Darrell did find a lifelong passion: dancing. He trained in ballet, modern, tap, and jazz, and performed as lead dancer in a trio and in Broadway musicals. "It was one of the best experiences that I ever had!"

At age 33, he moved to Boston to teach dance. Instead, he graduated from the culinary arts program at Boston University, where he built a successful career in food service and management.

He also met his "wonderful wife." Over the next 28 years, they raised her two girls and their daughter in a family

that was close-knit, churchgoing, and full of love. But after five years together, Darrell discovered that she had a secret cocaine addiction. In time, he, his wife, and the courts agreed that he should have custody of their daughters. He didn't want child support. He just wanted the girls to be safe and his wife "to do what she needs to do to get her life in order."

"I know that God has a plan for everyone who's still living!"

Sadly, she couldn't. Despite his wife's repeated attempts to get clean on her own, "I just couldn't stomach it anymore. I've been trying to get her help to overcome that for years." Last fall, Darrell felt he had to tell his wife that he could no longer deal with her drug use. He was going to have to leave.

In November 2020, Darrell moved back to Norfolk. His wife supported his choice. Despite their differences, "we still have a great relationship! We're just not living in the same household."

He had planned to stay with his sister for a while. That did not work out. With "nowhere else to go," Darrell lived in his car for three months.

"I prayed so hard!" Finally, his brother's pastor suggested that he try The Union Mission.

For five months now, Darrell has been grateful for a safe place to stay, free meals, daily showers, and real help. "I had anxiety when I was living in my car," but the mental health resources "have been great!" And through the Mission's Wellness Program "I'm doing everything I can to keep my health strong." As he and his case manager plan his future, "I know that if I keep going the way I'm going now, following the Lord's lead, I will get my life together."

Darrell wants to stay near Virginia Beach so that his family will have a fun place to visit. "I truly, truly want to get an apartment," and his Social Security and veteran's benefits will help him find housing. He hopes to work again in food service part-time. And he hopes his wife will do better, too.

"You don't always have to have it all together. You are never too old to learn. By being here, I'm very optimistic about things getting better for me!"

Help Darrell and others like him at unionmissionministries.org/donate

Thank you for Your Generosity!



REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*In Loving
Memory*

Linda C. Jones
1948-2021

In this usual season of gratitude and gifts, I cannot help but think of the faithful service of our friend and colleague Linda Jones, who entered eternity in August after a 20-month battle with ALS. Linda served here at The Union Mission for nearly a quarter of a century, most recently as our Director of Public Relations, but she was so much more than just the mouthpiece of our ministry. She was a genuine servant—helping wherever needed, praying with all who asked, writing the success stories of our shelter guests, and often baking them and her co-workers made-from-scratch birthday cakes. Truly she embodied our staff motto: Caring Like Christ.

If you've read our newsletter for any length of time, you have felt Linda's heart for our work and her hopes for our guests. Through your sacrificial giving, you have shown that you share them. Because of such unwavering faithfulness, the hundreds of men, women, and children that we serve each day take their first steps toward a new future as soon as they walk through our doors. Their better tomorrows start here.

We know that it is God Who is moving in their lives to bring them to saving faith and freedom in Jesus Christ, but you, too, play a role in their success. You make this ministry possible, and our staff is grateful for your partnership in serving the most vulnerable of our community. We appreciate that we can count on you. May God bless you for your generosity!

In His service,

2022
2021
LOADING...

As 2021 Comes to a Close

Make a holiday donation in honor of a friend or colleague or in memory of a loved one. We'll acknowledge your tribute with a card. Or consider making an extra year-end gift. It's tax-deductible and your generosity can change a life for good!

Please give generously today!
donate.unionmissionministries.org

Rev. Gray, I want to help The Union Mission end 2021 strong!

I've enclosed: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$_____

☐ I would like to commit to a **monthly gift** of \$_____. My first gift is enclosed.

Method of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Card Number _____ CCV Code _____

Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

Please make your check payable to The Union Mission. To make an online donation, go to donate.unionmissionministries.org.



Please complete this slip and return it to The Union Mission with your generous gift. Your gift is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send a receipt for your records.

11-2021

In the Magi's Footsteps

One Christmas Eve a mother told her young daughter how Jesus received only three gifts for His birthday—and that she should be grateful for whatever she found under the tree in the morning. Her daughter innocently challenged, “But don’t you think He asked Santa why none of them were toys?”

Stock Photo

Every December, our Nativity scenes usually include the three kings who brought gifts from the East. Most of what we know about these wise men comes from the book of Matthew, but do our modern-day displays reflect the truths of Scripture? Here’s what Dr. Mark L. Ward, Jr. says we might consider.

- ★ *There may not have been three wise men.*
- ★ *They didn’t arrive the night Jesus was born.*
- ★ *The magi were the first recorded Gentiles to worship Jesus.*

Because the magi brought at least three famous gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—we often assume that each gift had a separate giver. But the Bible never offers a specific number of kings. It just refers to them in the plural.

The Gospels tie Baby Jesus to just two events in Bethlehem: His birth and His consecration in the temple at 6 weeks old. Matthew says that the magi arrived “after Jesus was born” at the “house” where He was. It’s unlikely that Mary and Joseph stayed at the stable all that time.

The Bible doesn’t explain exactly how, but the wise men knew Jesus was the “King of the Jews.” Even though it’s believed they were magicians or astrologers, they were overjoyed to find the baby and worship Him as King.

Every December, we give gifts to one another and gather in worship of the King. One way we can do both is through the practice of biblical stewardship—giving generously to others in gratitude for the blessings we have received. This Christmas, you might volunteer your time, update your estate plan to include your favorite charity, or give a year-end donation. Follow in the magi’s footsteps and leave a holiday legacy that changes people’s lives.

IT’S EASY TO INCLUDE THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES IN YOUR WILL!

To create a will that reflects your values and blesses others, visit www.christianwill.org/umm or contact Helen Sommer at 757-627-8686, x504 or legacygiving@ummnorva.org.

Comments / Change of Address:

EMAIL

PHONE

No person is denied service based on race, creed, gender, disability, or national origin.

Photos are representative of actual Mission clients.

If you would like to donate much-needed supplies, please see unionmissionministries.org/ways-to-give/give-goods. Thank you!

In the event contributions exceed expenses, extra funds will be used to feed, shelter, and care for the hungry and homeless throughout the year.

Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 919-807-2214 or 888-830-4989 for NC residents.

THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES

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