

The
**UNION
MISSION**

MISSION NETWORK

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

NOVEMBER 2022



**"I'm moving from
death to life ...
God made a way
out of no way!"**

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**INSIDE: Health and Home for a Vietnam Vet | Veterans Serving Veterans
More Blessed to Give | Hope Begins with a Meal | Gifts of Joy for Homeless Men**

Battling to Become

The Vietnam War almost killed Ellery twice.

The youngest of 11 kids, Ellery and his siblings grew up in the South Norfolk church their father pastored. Their musical family ministered together. But one day, “I came home to find a letter that said, ‘Greetings from Uncle Sam.’ I’d been drafted.”

Better



In January 1967, at 19, Ellery reported for duty. “That was the worst day of my life!”

“The next thing I knew, I was over in Vietnam.” He was as an Army infantryman and heavy equipment welder, “but I did a lot more shooting than welding.” His unit, Eleven Bravo One, was based in a Viet Cong hotbed where combat was fierce. “I turned 20 in a foxhole under fire. I turned 21 in a rice paddy under fire.” Amazingly, Ellery’s worst war injury was a serious wound to his hand. The hospitalization would not be his last.

After returning from the war, Ellery worked as a welder and for decades pastored his own church in Greensboro, N.C. He also married and raised a loving family with his wife.

Though Ellery left Vietnam in mid-May 1970, Vietnam stayed with him. For years he avoided talking about the war and he suffered from nightmares and PTSD—but worse was yet to come.

In 2016, at age 69, Ellery was sick and rapidly losing weight. After scores of tests, six doctors gathered his family around his hospital bed to deliver the diagnosis. Ellery had stage-four kidney cancer that had metastasized. The physicians suggested hospice care so Ellery could die in peace. Though the

prognosis looked grim, “I made my mind up I wasn’t going to die.”

So did his Sentara oncologist, Dr. Mark Fleming—“He saw my future, too!”—and his urologist, Dr. Michael Williams. Ellery suspects that heavy chemical exposure to Agent Orange and CS gas during his tour of duty in Vietnam contributed to his poor health. Too frail to survive surgery, Ellery immediately started radiology and chemotherapy at Sentara’s Brock Cancer Center. The treatments were brutal, but worked.

*“When I feel
like I’m going to fall
backwards, I can
always feel His hand.”*

“Cancer changed everything,” including Ellery’s faith. “I did something stupid when I got sick. I got angry with God. It took me a long time to get my faith back.” Eventually Ellery told Him, “I’m putting all my trust in You. I’m going to ‘Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.’” In his spirit he felt a sense of peace.

In June 2021, when the burden of caregiving became “just too much” on his wife, Ellery came to The Union Mission. “This has been the best place for me.” He credits the Bible study, prayers, and Wellness support for helping him in his battle for his health. “So, I’ve been in the fight for six years, but God brought me through.” His doctors recently told him that his kidney cancer is just about gone—“I’m moving from death to life!”

And Ellery recently moved into his own apartment through Norfolk’s Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program. “God made a way out of no way!” Plus, Ellery discovered that his neighbor a floor down is a Vietnam veteran as well—and as it turns out, they both served in the same unit overseas, but never knew each other. They check in on each other and Ellery is delighted that God has given him “an Army brother.”

But he’s most appreciative of the ongoing spiritual encouragement. His Mission case manager, Rev. Raymond Evans, urges Ellery, now 75, to “stir up the gifts and preach the Word” again, and Ellery believes the Lord will reenergize him to share his testimony. “I can tell people something because I’ve been through something. By the grace of God, I’m holding on. God has kept me through thick and thin!”

For more about Ellery’s journey, see **Stories of Hope** at unionmissionministries.org.

On a Mission to Serve

Hampton Roads is home to many veterans, but each month 25 to 30 homeless vets live here at The Union Mission. Staff members who have served our country share why they enjoy serving veterans in need.

REV. WILLIAM CRAWLEY | Just as veterans served and sacrificed to safeguard our freedom and liberties, it is an honor and obligation to aid those who are, sadly, most vulnerable and encountering extreme hardship. Seeing these once-homeless men and women restored to their dignity, respect, identity, and peace—through God's grace and the collective efforts and prayers of Union Mission staff, donors, volunteers, and our community—is the ultimate reward!

The Union Mission has been blessed by longstanding relationships with organizations that help American veterans. Chief among these has been our partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Our shelter guests have found housing resources through Supportive Services for Veteran Families, with one resident even becoming a homeowner thanks to his VA loan eligibility. The VA medical centers have assisted our guests with physical care, mental health support, disability claims, and substance abuse recovery resources. The Mission has been especially grateful for the on-site assistance of the Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program. Week after week, HCHV representative Evie Woods has served the veterans in our shelters with her presence and her professionalism. Her 14-plus years of faithful service to The Union Mission prove that we could not ask for a better partner!



REV. WILLIAM CRAWLEY
Chief Operations Officer
The Union Mission / Shelters
Veteran, U.S. Navy, 1990–1994

EVIE WOODS, LCSW
Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program
Hampton Veterans Administration Medical Center
Veteran, U.S. Army



WALTER MULLEN, M.A.
Case Manager, Bashford Men's Shelter
Veteran, U.S. Navy, Retired, 1981–2001



CYNETRA DUNLAP
Discipleship Manager, Women and Children's Shelter
Veteran, U.S. Navy, 2001–2005



SUSAN HOSTER
Donor Relations Manager
Union Mission Development Department
Wife of Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps, 1986–2008

WALTER MULLEN

The Lord has been calling me to service for many years, but I did not hear it too clearly. I joined the Navy for direction and stability at a time in my life when I needed it, and the Navy gave me just that. The Navy also gave me the ability to make decisions under pressure, to be proactive, and to treat everyone with dignity and respect. All of that prepared me for service at The Union Mission, where the Bible is part of the Employee Handbook and prayer is at the core of our being. I was proud to serve this country with many men and women who were outstanding individuals and ultimate team players. I must say I serve today with those same kind of people.

I find it an honor to serve my homeless brothers in arms who are going through a rough time. When I speak with a vet, I can truly say I understand. There are a lot of mental health issues that they do not realize they have or may not want to admit. With the resources that are now available to the Mission and with our valued partner Ms. Woods, we can help now more than ever. We can give them a better chance of fighting the good fight and getting back on track.

CYNETRA DUNLAP

Our heavenly Father knows all too well about personal sacrifice—He gave His one and only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, for our lives. Our veterans, too, have lived a life of sacrifice. They've faced trauma and hardships, spent time away from their families, and risked their own physical and mental well-being with no assurance of returning back home the same way they left it. I'm forever grateful for those who have surrendered their lives so that others could experience freedom. I salute you, one service member to another!

It brings joy to my heart to recognize, uplift, and encourage the homeless veterans I meet here, to let them know that they matter, that they're seen and heard, even when it seems that eyes and ears have been closed. I can remind them that they haven't been forgotten.

I am privileged to stand alongside them as they return to civilian life, though living a normal life can be challenging for them—some things can't be unseen or undone. But it's rewarding to be able to comfort others in their troubles with the same comfort God has given me (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

SUSAN HOSTER

As a 22-year military spouse who interacts with our donors every day, I am deeply thankful that you make it possible for The Union Mission to create a safe, stable environment for so many veterans every month. Your generosity provides healthy food, life-skills classes, and help with accessing veterans benefits for the men and women (and their families) who have sacrificed so much to serve our country. For many veterans, especially those who are homeless, there are life-long scars on their physical bodies and to their spirits that hinder them from having a full, healthy life after their commitment to the Armed Services has ended. While they are here at The Union Mission, you can be sure these veterans are treated with the compassion and care they deserve to restore their brokenness to wholeness. Thank you for the sacrifices you make to give so generously to The Union Mission so we can serve, restore, and give back to these United States veterans in their time of need.

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 outside of bag.)

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

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



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

MONDAY-FRIDAY | 9 AM-5 PM | BY DECEMBER 19

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



**Just \$2.78
Provides a Delicious
Holiday Meal!**

As you sit around your Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner tables with family or friends, we will give certainly thanks for our many blessings. But for our homeless neighbors, many of them in our shelters, these holidays are just another day.

We hope you'll help our homeless shelter guests celebrate with a true holiday feast! You can provide a holiday meal—with all the fixings and the joy of celebrating with people who care—for just \$2.78! And the same is true every day of the year.

Give a Meal and Change a Life!

unionmissionministries.org/meals

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 for our shelter guests, especially those who work offsite.** We need to distribute about 120 to 150 each day—and we have easy packing lists with suggested items.
- 2 Prepare or cater a full, pre-cooked meal for our shelter guests.** You can choose to serve the Men's Shelter (120 servings), the Women and Children's Shelter (40 servings), or both (160 servings)! Menus are available.
- 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.

Employment

Immediate Impact – Eternal Rewards

The Union Mission Ministries is hiring! If you are interested in meaningful ministry in your employment, take a look at our current job openings or apply online at unionmissionministries.org/job-opportunities



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



Thank you for Your Generosity!



REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November marks the start of our traditional season of gratitude and gifts—and as both remind me of our donors, I have cause to rejoice. Your faithful prayers and provision help sustain The Union Mission and our work to help those who are facing homelessness and seeking hope. We are grateful to have your partnership in ministry as our shelter guests build a better future. You truly are a Heaven-sent gift to us and to all those we serve.

Lately our staff has been summarizing our mission as “Caring Like Christ.” Yes, we offer safe shelter and nutritious meals, clean clothing, and practical training to each of our shelter guests. But most of all, we want them to feel God’s compassion, to be transformed by the truths of the Gospel, as we share the love of Jesus with each man, woman, and child who comes through our doors. You help make that possible!

As we approach the end of 2022, we believe God has even greater plans for our ministry in 2023. It means so much to know that we can count on you! For all of us here at The Union Mission Ministries, thank you for your unwavering support. May God bless you for your faithful generosity!

In His service,

As the Year Draws to a Close



Why not
make a holiday donation
in honor of a friend, colleague,
or special occasion—or honor
the memory of a loved one?
We’ll acknowledge your tribute
with a lovely card. Or it’s not
too late to make an extra year-
end gift. It’s tax-deductible,
you’ll help us start 2023 off well,
and your kindness can change a
life for good!

Please give generously today!
donate.unionmissionministries.org

Rev. Gray, I want to help you Care Like Christ for those who are homeless in Hampton Roads!

Email _____ Phone _____

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.

11-2022



No Generous People Live Longer?

We've all heard that "it's more blessed to give than to receive," but did you know there's scientific data to back it up? Over the past 20 years, researchers have found that giving creates a "warm glow" of dopamine in the body. Generosity lights up the same parts of the brain as eating dessert or receiving money.

In a study by the University of Zurich, Professor Philippe Tobler found that older people who practice generosity tend to have better health as well. It may be "as effective at lowering blood pressure as medication or exercise," he says. "Moreover, there is a positive association between helping others and life expectancy, perhaps because helping others reduces stress."

Science just proves what Proverbs 11:25 has been saying all along, "A generous person will prosper. Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed." May you experience that special satisfaction of generosity all season long!

Teach what you know.

Some of the best gifts aren't wrapped. Pass down your skill of knitting or carpentry. Share a favorite family recipe and demonstrate your special touches that make it delicious.

During the holidays, we naturally turn to generosity, but here are some unexpected ways you can give—and experience an endorphin boost—this season:

Give compassion.

Does your loved one value a specific cause or group? Donate to their church or favorite charity in their honor, or offer to volunteer together in a meaningful activity to help others.

Pass along a family heirloom.

Instead of buying something new or designating the gift in your will, give someone a prized possession this year—when you can surprise the recipient and enjoy the reaction.

Think long-term.

Consider leaving a donation to a charity you love in your will. Such plan-ahead generosity not only leaves an impact for future generations, but fills your heart with joy today, too.

Write a personal note.

Describe how you feel about your loved one. Recall a special memory you share or tell them how they've made you feel special. Genuine compliments always go a long way.

IT'S EASY TO INCLUDE THE UNION MISSION MINISTRIES IN YOUR GIVING!

To include us in your estate planning or change lives with a legacy gift, contact Helen Sommer at 757-627-8686, x 504. To create a will that reflects your values and blesses others, visit www.christianwill.org/umm or email us at 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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