



**“Where would these
men be if they didn’t
have The Union
Mission and the
love of Jesus?”**

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FROM BROKENNESS TO Brotherhood

Through Faith and Service



At the Union Mission, stories of transformation are written every day—but few are as powerful as that of Donald. Once a guest seeking refuge, Donald became a servant-leader whose life now reflects the redemptive power of God's grace.

Years ago, Donald arrived at the Mission burdened by grief. “In a three-year period, I had very close relatives who passed away—mother and father, grandparents, a sister, and a brother. It was just too much,” he shared. Emotionally overwhelmed, he withdrew from life until a friend encouraged him to seek help at the Mission.

That step of faith led him into the discipleship program and eventually into a 14-year career of service. “I say ‘serve’ because that’s what we do—serve gentlemen,” Donald said. Rising to the role of shelter manager supervisor, he helped bring structure and dignity to the Mission’s operations. “The shelter staff are carefully trained professionals now in what they do.”

But Donald’s journey was far from easy. Five years ago, he suffered three strokes in one week. “I woke up on the floor in the morning. I didn’t know what happened,”

he recalled. The strokes affected his cognition and patience—qualities essential for his role. “I realized I could no longer do the job effectively.”

Then came another blow: a diagnosis of stage 4 prostate cancer. “By the time I had the diagnosis, the cancer had already spread into my lymph nodes,” Donald said. Yet even in the face of illness, he continued to serve. Today, he teaches life-preparation classes to men at the Mission. “Who better to do it than someone who’s been in their shoes?”

Through it all, Donald’s faith has remained his anchor. “People say things like, ‘There’s a reason for this,’ and you think, ‘What reason would there be for me to have a stroke?’ But it turned me around. It woke me up.”

He speaks candidly about the emotional toll of illness. “I lost my self-confidence. I just raged at night... lying in bed, that’s when you can let it go.” But he also shares how God met him in those dark places. “I don’t feel like it’s a curse or a setback. There is a reason for it.”

Donald’s story is a reminder that healing often comes through community. “Most every man who comes in here has been broken in some fashion—and I’m living proof of it.” His message to donors is clear: “You’re creating productive men, citizens. These guys are coming out of here with newfound hope.”



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

Triana's Story

OF STRENGTH AND RENEWAL

From Georgia to Virginia, Triana's path has been anything but easy—but it's been guided every step of the way by faith.

Triana spent nearly a decade as an assistant teacher at Clifton School in Atlanta, nurturing children with love and patience—a gift she inherited from her grandmother, a foster parent who raised her in a home full of children, church, and soul food. "It was normal for us to go out with 50 family members," she laughed. "That's just how we lived—together."

But life changed when Triana's health declined, and she began dialysis. The physical toll, combined with unstable housing and relationships, led her to make a bold move. At the invitation of a friend, she relocated to Virginia in search of healing and peace. What she found was unexpected—homelessness, uncertainty, and fear.

Yet Triana never lost her faith.

She found temporary shelter in a church and, through a divine connection, was guided to The Union Mission. "I didn't know what to expect," she said. "But I prayed, and God said, 'Just hold out.'" That first shower at the Mission was more than physical relief—it was a moment of safety and grace. She was welcomed with kindness, given food, and a bed. Now in the RISE Transition Program, Triana has time to breathe and heal as she takes financial classes, counseling, and studies God's Word.

Despite the exhaustion of dialysis and the challenges of starting over, Triana pressed forward. She found part-time work at Wegmans, stocking meats with joy and gratitude. "I never thought I'd be here," she smiled, "but I like it. It's a blessing."

She dreams of owning her own home, of welcoming her daughter and future son-in-law to Virginia, of having a kidney transplant, and of possibly returning to work with children or pursuing mental health counseling. "Everyone needs someone to talk to," she said. "Mental health is important—no matter who you are."

Through it all, Triana holds fast to her belief: "God is working. I just have to wait on Him." Her story is a testament

to the power of faith in the face of uncertainty. The Union Mission became her reset button—a place where hope is restored, and new beginnings are born.

Triana's journey reminds us that even in our darkest valleys, God walks with us. Her life is a living testimony that with faith, patience, and a heart open to grace, we can rise, rebuild, and rejoice.

*"God is working.
I just have to wait
on Him."*



Get Involved in 2026

YOU can give hope to our homeless neighbors.

Here are some ways you can help @ unionmissionministries.org/get-involved

✓ VOLUNTEER

No matter your skills or talents, we have a role for you at The Mission. Go to our website to sign up for our next volunteer orientation on March 14th.

✓ CLEAN & DONATE

Gently used items provide clothing to our guests, housewares for families, and dishes for veterans moving into new homes. Men's winter coats are especially needed. Items you no longer use are precious to someone starting a new life. Donation Drop-off M-F/9-5 pm.

✓ EMPLOY

For many, a new life starts with a new job. Consider hiring a Mission guest. Local businesses are impressed with the work ethic and loyalty that come with offering a second chance.

✓ LEASE

The goal of all our guests is a home! If you have an appropriate rental property, we can match you with a hard-working, grateful tenant. Call 757-627-8686 and ask for our Housing Navigator.

✓ WORK

Looking for Christians called to serve God's people in need. If you want to "Care like Christ" in your workplace, we are hiring for our program, administrative, and operations teams.

Fairways to Homes

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OCTOBER 2, 2026

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Cafe**

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A Paycheck and A Purpose

Are you looking for
meaningful employment
this year?

The Union Mission Ministries
is hiring for several positions.
Take a look at our current job
openings online at:

[unionmissionministries.org/
job-opportunities](http://unionmissionministries.org/job-opportunities)



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NORFOLK, VA 23502

757-627-8686



Happy, hope-filled New Year!



REV. JOHN W. GRAY, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We look ahead to 2026 with deep gratitude and unwavering hope—because of you. Your generosity has helped us share the love of Christ with hundreds of men, women, children and families both at The Union Mission and at Hope Haven in the last year.

Our Women's Ministry Director, Keisha Bachelor expressed it so well when she said: "We see the impact of your support in the smiles of children who feel safe, in the relief on a mother's face as she finds rest, and in the renewed strength families gain daily."

You give hope to the hurting, nourishment to the needy, and encouragement to the empty—thank you for standing with us! We look forward to continuing our Lord's work together in the New Year. May God bless and keep you!

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Gray".

Rev. Gray, I want to give hope to shelter guests at The Union Mission!

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.

ANCHORS OF HOPE...

Faithful, sustaining or monthly supporters of The Union Mission are caring like Christ and changing lives all year long!



**Become an Anchor of Hope today
by signing up on-line at
donate.unionmissionministries.org**

**Or contact us at
giving@ummnorva.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.

01-2026

3 Lessons for Building Your Legacy Game Plan

When it comes to football, you may rather root for the Commanders, Ravens or Panthers. (Note--we have fans from all three on staff here at the mission.) Still, those cheeseheads from up north are an intriguing bunch. They have a rich history, 13 world championships, and an ownership structure different from any other team in the league.

The Green Bay Packers are a publicly owned nonprofit corporation, the property of more than 500,000 shareholders who love the team and the Green Bay community. The shares can't be traded; they can only be passed between immediate family members, as a gift or through inheritance. The result? A football franchise that thrives in a small market and a legacy of loving tradition that's handed off between generations.

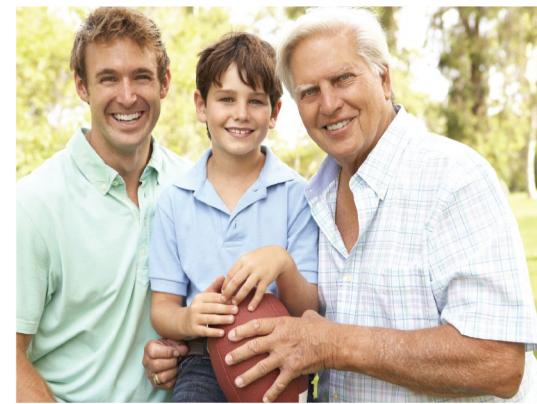
As you draw up your own legacy game plan, there are some helpful takeaways from the Packers and their fans.

YOUR LEGACY IS AS UNIQUE AS YOU ARE.

Like those who pass off their Packers shares, you also have a distinctive legacy for those who come after you. That can include tangible assets, but more importantly, the faith and values that have guided your life.

INVEST IN WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU.

What enduring things are you investing in? Consider your relationships, your faith, and the causes close to your heart like the work of Union Mission Ministries.



LEGACY KEEPS ON GIVING.

It's not unusual for people to purchase Packers shares as gifts for significant occasions, inspiring a new generation of fans. The legacy you're creating now will impact those who come after you through the values you live out. One meaningful way to do that is by including Union Mission Ministries in your will, a gift that makes a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve.

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

Comments / Change of Address:

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

No person is denied service based on race, creed, gender, national origin, or disability unless it is beyond the scope of our care.

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 those experiencing homelessness 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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