



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

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A Pastoral Letter to Federal Workers Summarily Dismissed from their Jobs

To our fellow Americans who find themselves unemployed and concerned for their futures after being fired by the Trump Administration:

We see you and we share your dismay and outrage at the swiftness and unfairness of these actions. We thank you for your years of serving the common good and providing for the general welfare of our country. We value your education, experience, and dedication to government service, knowing that you often forego higher-paying positions in the private sector to serve our country with your training and expertise. We honor your sacrifice and commitment to something greater than yourselves.

We are also dismayed by how this current administration has deemed your positions unnecessary and a drag on our national "efficiency." It has cited widespread fraud with only scant evidence. Your jobs keep us safe, healthy, and well-informed. Your research allows us to be well-informed and has bolstered our "best and brightest" as thought-leaders admired throughout the world. Your work keeps the gears of our country turning smoothly and provides us with security such that we can trust that life in this nation will be safe, healthy, fair, and predictably ordered.

We know that a system as vast and complex as our federal government needs monitoring, pruning, and consistent oversight and improvement. Yet we also believe you, and our nation, are entitled to a comprehensive, well-considered, and orderly plan for change. Of course, no one wants to be quickly fired, without legitimate rationale for our termination, and with unsubstantiated allegations of poor performance in our personnel files. Such action reflects poorly on all of us, on the United States, and most of all, on our elected (and perhaps even more alarming, unelected) leadership. We are embarrassed at how you have been treated.

We especially want to acknowledge the plight of federal workers and contractors in our own Commonwealth. Virginia is home to over 144,000 federal employees and ranks as the top state in the nation for federal contract awards, totaling \$106 billion in 2023. Many of these workers are stellar leaders in our Virginia churches and communities. We have heard firsthand their stories of abrupt termination and hardship.

The prophet Micah proclaims "God has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8) As such, we will not remain silent in the face of such widespread injustice. We will not turn a blind eye to the unmerciful treatment of our neighbors (as a centibillionaire gleefully dances with a chainsaw, celebrating these firings). We cannot condone the complete lack of humility exhibited by those championing these cuts.

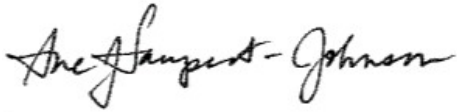
We know you are hurting, confused, and angry. We also know that you are gifted, educated public servants with valuable experience and hearts wired for public service and the common good. We also know that God is not done with you yet.

To that end, we extend to you these invitations:

1. Our United Methodist congregations offer you comfort and solace during these difficult times. We invite you to reach out to a United Methodist pastor for support and encouragement. These clergy leaders will stand with you and welcome you to find a place of healing and hope, as well as to use your considerable gifts in new ways to continue to serve your community.
2. If you are United Methodist, we invite you to discern anew God's call on your life. God is with you at this time and is opening up new pathways for you to continue to use your numerous gifts and talents. You may even consider serving as a lay or clergy leader in the church. If you are discerning a call to licensed or

ordained ministry, we invite you to contact the [district superintendent](#) in your area so that you can learn of new ways of putting your gifts to work to transform the world.

We offer our sincere sympathies amidst the turmoil you are experiencing, but we bear witness that God often uses times of turmoil and upheaval to change lives and fulfill God's own desired future, a future with hope. We pray that this will be so in your lives and in the life of our beloved country.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Hauptert-Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, the VAUMC Appointive Cabinet, and VAUMC Conference Lay Leader