

## About Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud

Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud is currently the Executive Director at 1JustCity, an umbrella organization created to bring financial stability and greater visibility to the outreach ministries of the United Church of Canada in Winnipeg.

Under Tessa's leadership for the last four years, 1JustCity has been incredibly successful in diversifying funding for the ministries outside of the Church, becoming an incorporated non-for-profit, and meeting its mandate to actively love the underloved. When 1JustCity achieved charitable status, it also ensured a future for the outreach sites. Tessa has grown their supporter, volunteer, and donor list exponentially. The work of 1JustCity has given Tessa the opportunity to live her faith through her daily interactions with people.

Tessa started full-time at 1JustCity in 2015, the same year she married her husband Hanwakan Blaikie Whitecloud. Together they spent time facilitating workshops on reconciliation and restitution, mentoring youth and volunteering. Hanwakan was instrumental in the early days of Just a Warm Sleep, an emergency warming centre at 109 Pulford Street in the Oak Table. The couple spends a lot of time cycling, practicing yoga, and spending time with their Goddaughters, Godson, Nieces and Nephews.

Growing up active in all facets of her home congregation Transcona Memorial United Church; Tessa looks back with special affection on her time in Canadian Girls in Training, delivering Christmas Hampers with her dad, Bill Blaikie, and many games of hide and go seek in the church buildings. Tessa first took to the pulpit at the age of 17 after a school mission trip to Bolivia. Working in Winnipeg's North End for many years as a summer camp leader, Tessa developed her passion for social justice. She served as overseas mission staff in Trinidad around race relations.

During her MA in Political Economy Tessa continued to look at the ways that Canadians must not only be 'allies' but also owners of the injustices Indigenous people are facing. Tessa lectured on this regularly on top of teaching in the Sociology department at University of Winnipeg from 2015- 2019. Her master's work involved an internship with KAIROS ecumenical justice initiatives, a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Grassy Narrows First Nation, and conference presentations on solidarity.