



Vanessa has been a leader and change maker from a young age. As a high school student, Vanessa served on the Youth Ministry Council of the Coastal Plains for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). During her time on the council, Vanessa planned two weekend youth events, including a service-focused rally for high school youth from an area stretching from Beaumont and Orange in the east, to the Greater Houston Area, to Bay City in the west, and to College Station and Huntsville in the north. Prior to serving on the Youth Ministry Council, Vanessa thought she wanted to pursue a career as a lawyer, but her time working with youth led to a desire to serve others through the church.

Vanessa came to Tarrant County in 1998 to attend TCU, where she studied religion and philosophy. During that time, she served as director of youth ministry at WestWind Church in Keller, TX. Her work with the youth in monthly service projects led her to pursue a masters of science in social work with a focus in non-profit management. Vanessa worked with Northside Inter Church Agency, Lena Pope Home, and The Institute for Learning Abilities, and she spent five years in charitable management for a local business. Her work with foundations and PACs provided an opportunity for Vanessa to meet many local and state public servants and inspired her to have a more direct impact in her community. Vanessa was appointed to the Benbrook Parks and Recreation Board in 2007 and later the Planning and Zoning Commission. She also actively worked with the Obama Campaign registering voters, canvassing, phone banking, and training volunteers, often bringing her daughter Sophia along in a baby carrier.

Her service with the Obama Campaign made her feel at home in a way that she hadn't while in the private sector and motivated her to find a new way to serve people in her community. In 2009, Vanessa started teaching science in Fort Worth ISD, first at Rosemont Middle School and later at Benbrook Middle-High School, where she teaches 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science and leads as the Science Department Chair.

As a teacher, Vanessa has been recognized as a leader in her field. She has written curriculum, led trainings within the district as well as at the Science Teachers Association of Texas annual conference, and presented workshops to first-year teachers in the T-MATE alternative certification program of Tarleton State University. She was also recognized as the 2014–2015 Teaching Chair of Excellence for Secondary Science in Fort Worth ISD, and she has served as the Science Department Chair for the last four years. Vanessa has also played an active role in her school outside of the classroom by serving on the PTA, Site Based Decision Making Committee, District Employee Relations Council, the Gold Seal Program of Choice Exploratory Committee, and sponsoring the student-led LGBTQ+ group.

Vanessa is also an active member of her congregation, First Congregational Church - United Church of Christ in Fort Worth. She is currently serves on the Christian Education Committee. In the past, she has served as a Sunday school teacher and served on the Pastoral Relations Council and as the Chair of the Christian Service Committee where she had an active role in planning the church's annual participation in the Fort Worth Pride Parade. Her husband, Dean, chairs the Deacon Committee and has also taught SundaySchool. Together, Dean and Vanessa strive to teach their daughters Sophia and Violet about how their faith calls them to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the foreigner, and care for the sick and imprisoned. Vanessa's faith is a driving force in all of her actions as she seeks to embody the commandment to love her neighbors as herself.

Now Vanessa has been motivated to serve her community in a new way by running for U.S. Congressional District 12. The foundation of her entire campaign and position on issues is to give every person in our great nation equal access and opportunity to pursue liberty, health, and happiness by tearing down the barriers to the freedom that allows individuals to be their best selves and live their lives to the fullest.