

Advance Commitment Testimony: Rev. Hannah Turner

Before you get married, everyone tells you to have conversations about your finances with your partner. But what they don't tell you is WHAT you should talk about regarding finances. Bailey and I have shared our finances since we moved in together. I was in seminary full time and my "business" was just starting so she was really the only money earner. For a good portion of our time in Texas, we made 30k a year, had 2 car payments, an incoming wedding, and three spoiled dogs. We would often find ourselves calling up Bailey's parents down the road and saying "what are you guys thinking for dinner..." because we knew if we went out to eat, Bailey's Dad, a true cowboy, would never let three women pay for their own meal. Eventually, my business started making some money and even though he still would never let us pay for a meal out, we would invite him over for some "home cookin'" and we paid him back that way. Moving from Texas to California came with its own set of challenges. For starters finding a good BBQ is rare, and why is everything so much more expensive? Though we moved here both knowing we would have stable and higher paying jobs, our rent tripled, and so did our food spending because California is absolutely delicious.

Bailey did not grow up in church. She understood very little about church culture, what it means to be a follower of Jesus, the commitments...but she understood that this was something I felt I was called to. I realized I did not talk to her, ever, about how much we gave per year to the churches in our entire relationship history. So why should attending this new congregation in Berkeley be any different? It wasn't intentional. It was just habit, and because she didn't really ever see the finances anyway, she never asked about it. But as I joined the capital campaign Build Gather Grow meetings, I noticed my heart

feeling more eager to give. To be honest, I couldn't even begin to imagine what more we could give financially to this church. Bailey and I are still paying off our Wedding, Student Loans, and car payments, we still have 3 spoiled dogs, and Bailey just asked me if we could set aside some money to buy more underwear! Imagine that! Underwear. But how could I not think to give to this campaign. I came into this community from Poolville TX not knowing any single one of the members of this congregation. And from Day 1, me and my family were welcomed with open arms. I not only received my "first call" here, but was granted a beautiful ordination and installation ceremony. I was given the space to fumble and mess up and be absent within the first few months of my employment because of the wedding, I kept getting sick, we kept moving. This congregation is truly one of the key reasons, moving back to the bay area with my family was even possible. How could I ever imagined that I would work under two amazing and wise women pastors whose patience as I learn and respect for my specialties meets me weekly. Yeah, we may be having some trouble...with spending too much money on eating out, or bougie coffee creating a cash flow problem when we need things like underwear and paper towels. But we are learning! Okay. So I figured that out. Now I need my wife to arrive at the same conclusion. We sat down one evening and I explained all this to her. I named the wonderful opportunities this congregation has offered us and she named a few of her own, like friendship and a space to be truly and authentically herself! None of that pressure to be the "pastor's wife" whatever that means. And it is in our thankfulness to this congregation and the work God is engaging through you and to us, we were able to offer our pledge of \$6000 to the Build Gather Grow Campaign. We are excited for the endless possibilities that this building will offer our congregation and its surrounding community.