

## **NOAH HEPLER – THE GAY PASTOR**

**Age:** 44

**Occupation:** Lutheran Pastor

**Location:** Fishtown, Philadelphia

**Relationship Status:** Single



**BACKGROUND:** Noah is the head pastor for a Lutheran church in Fishtown, Philadelphia. He grew up in a very conservative fundamentalist Baptist household in North Carolina and entered the seminary at 19-years-old. He has wrestled with his sexual orientation and prayed that God "fix him" his entire life. He was married to a woman for 6 years but eventually he knew he had to be honest with himself and her. She first person he came out to. After the divorce, Noah decided to move to the more liberal city of Philadelphia. He is now comfortably out and a vocal advocate for Queer rights in his church. He is beloved by his congregation, but he has had major trouble dating. He's only had one relationship with a man, and he was devastated when that ended suddenly. He thinks the fact that he's clergy turns a lot of people off, "When it gets to the question of what do you do? I say 'I'm a pastor,' and the conversation quite often ends right there." This pastor is ready to start dating, but wants to take care of himself and feel good about himself and what he's presenting first.

**WHY NOW:** Over the past few years, Noah's congregation has significantly lessened. They are down 75% of their membership. Fishtown has always been a blue-collar town, but within the past 5 years, it is rapidly gentrifying, and people are moving out. On top of that many people have stopped going to church in the wake of the Church scandals. Noah is going through this transition as well as his own as a middle-aged gay man.

### **CALLING IN THE EXPERTS:**

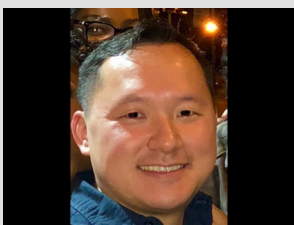
**FASHION:** Noah wears his "clerics" 50% of the time and his "regular clothes" the other half. He says he missed out on the "gay gene" and his closet looks like that of a gothic teenager. He loves black!! ...and wears his clothes 2-3 sizes too large. Fun Fact: there's a lot of variation in clergy street garb, Tan could have a field day finding more stylish clerical outfits for Noah.

**GROOMING:** Noah's nominator frequently prays that Noah STOPS USING AXE BODY SPRAY. Noah is unaware that his cologne is so potent. He says he grew up having to be clean-shaven, so he sticks to what he knows.

**DESIGN:** Noah lives "on campus" at the rectory 10-feet from the church. His building is an Edwardian-style row home, that has 30 years of deferred maintenance. Because he is the residing pastor, Noah lives rent-free and takes home about 10K a year. There's a leaky ceiling, 70's-tastic floor tiles, crumbling plaster, and Noah is constantly researching ways to update and improve on his humble budget. He loves IKEA and heads there whenever he gets a moment.

**FOOD:** Noah mostly eats out. His nominator says he's a competent cook and enjoys cooking, but seems to have a few signature dishes that have been the same for decades. He could use some encouragement and some new ideas. There's a kitchen in his house, 2 in the church, and many food events where he could put his new skills to use.

**CULTURE:** The larger narrative of what it means to be Christian in America. Noah says it's challenging enough to be religious, but then when you say you're a pastor, people judge.



**EVENT:** Drag Bingo in the church basement

#### **Nominator: Rob Thao**

Rob is a dear friend and current roommate of Noah's (no they have never dated! He has seen his friend go through the divorce of his wife to now dating as a gay man and wants him to live his life to the fullest!



