

Lambert House in Leffler House



by Ken Shulman

THE Lambert House LGBTQ+ Youth Center will be housed temporarily at Saint Mark's Cathedral (in parts of Leffler House and the Carriage House) beginning in March 2024 and extending for one to two years. During that time, the brick foundation built in 1901 under Lambert House's permanent home on top of Capitol Hill will be replaced in a seismic upgrade.

The mesh of missions between Saint Mark's and Lambert House couldn't be better. By housing Seattle's LGBTQ+ youth center, Saint Mark's is continuing its long history of social justice action and inclusion on LGBTQ+ issues. The former Lesbian & Gay Ministry at Saint Mark's (a predecessor to the current Queer in Christ Ministry) had two weekly meal teams that provided dinners for LGBTQ+ youth at Lambert House for years. The Lesbian & Gay Ministry at Saint Mark's invited me to speak about LGBTQ+ youth at Saint Mark's three times over the years, once in Bloedel Hall, once in Thomsen Chapel, and once in Leffler House, where my office will soon be located, and where LGBTQ+ youth will soon make friends and find community with each other.

I imagine that most of us reading *The Rubric* know that many LGBTQ+ youth have suffered in their faith communities, or in their homes, due to prejudice communicated as God's word. Millions of parents have rejected their LGBTQ+ children because their pastors and their Christian teachings told them to. That still happens, even here in Seattle. Religion is, and always has been, the main justification that anti-gay parents cite when they kick their LGBTQ+ child to the curb, forcing them into homelessness and survival sex. Some parents force their LGBTQ+ child into torturous, cruel so-called conversion therapy programs that have never converted a single person but have severely harmed millions, usually unwilling minors. So it is especially important that the LGBTQ+

youth at Lambert House, and their parents, see that a Christian faith community, Saint Mark's Cathedral, embraces, houses, welcomes, and celebrates LGBTQ+ youth. For those LGBTQ+ youth who have suffered due to their parents' religious beliefs, it can be uplifting to learn that there are Christian communities that accept them as fully human, no better and no worse than anyone else.

Lambert House is non-sectarian. We have youth participants whose parents adhere to every imaginable system of belief: Atheist, Mormon, Muslim, Jewish, Agnostic, Catholic, Evangelical, Eastern Orthodox, various Protestant denominations, Buddhist, Secular Humanist, and more. Lambert House creates spaces for LGBTQ+ youth to be themselves, where they will not be discriminated against, excluded, excoriated, shunned, or belittled based on prejudice towards their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is also necessary that they not feel pressured into conforming to a particular belief system or doctrine, whether political, social, or religious, in order to fit in, or to be accepted at Lambert House. The missions of Saint Mark's and Lambert House align in this profound acceptance. I look forward to multiple conversations with interested Lambert House youth, singly and in groups, about what it means to them to have their LGBTQ+ youth center housed at Saint Mark's, and how Saint Mark's inclusion and social justice feel in action. ♦

Ken Shulman, MPA, is Executive Director of Lambert House LGBTQ+ Youth Center

