

OUR SPEAKERS

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, **Arno Michaelis** was a leader of a worldwide racist skinhead organization, a reverend of a self-declared Racial Holy War, and lead singer of the hate-metal band Centurion, which sold 20,000 CDs by the mid-nineties and is still popular with racists today. Single parenthood, love for his daughter, and the forgiveness shown by people he once hated all helped to turn Arno's life around, bringing him to embrace diversity and practice gratitude for all life. Arno is now a speaker, author of *My Life After Hate*, co-author of *The Gift of Our Wounds*, and very fortunate to be able to share his ongoing process of character development as an educator working with Serve 2 Unite. Founded as an ongoing peaceful response to the August 5, 2012, Sikh Temple shooting in Oak Creek, WI, S2U engages audiences of all ages creatively with a global network of peacemakers and mentors in partnership with Against Violent Extremism, The Forgiveness Project, Search For Common Ground, and Parents for Peace.

Arno visited St. Mark's in 2015 as part of our parish's Peace Lectures that year hosting The Forgiveness Project. We welcome him back for two nights as we continue to find ways of making peace through the reconciling call of our Christian faith.



Baptized and raised at St. Mark's Church, we are honored to have **Devin Burns** share some painful history of the Episcopal Church and our role in the Confederacy and beyond. Devin has recently earned her doctorate in American Religious History from The Florida State University. Dr. Burns' dissertation is about the Confederate Episcopal Church and its relationship to slavery and white supremacy. A graduate of Suncoast High School, Dr. Burns was active at St. Mark's in the youth group, choir and Scouting. We welcome her "home" and look forward to her truthful and challenging talk as she invites us to continue to find ways of racial reconciliation so that future generations grow together in mutual respect and love.



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THURSDAY EVENINGS THIS SPRING

April 4, April, 11 and April 18
7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

St. Mark's Coleman Hall in the Staluppi Center

In our polarized and politicized world, it's hard for us to talk about the complex intersection of race and religion, and how we answer Christ's call to be reconcilers and bridge-builders. Join us for **The Peace Lectures** at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palm Beach Gardens on three Thursday evenings this spring -- April 4, April, 11 and April 18 -- as we welcome experts who can help us learn to reach across the barriers of race and religion to find peace with our neighbors.

The Peace Lectures are held in Coleman Hall in the Staluppi Center on the St. Mark's campus, 3395 Burns Road, Palm Beach Gardens. Each session begins at 7 p.m. and ends at 8:30 p.m. A free-will offering is accepted, but the Lectures are free and open to the public.

APRIL 4

A DOCUMENTARY AND DISCUSSION ON RACE, RELIGION

Mr. Arno Michaelis will lead a viewing and discussion of "Refuge," a documentary film he helped produce that is now being shown on Delta Airline flights around the world. The film features a leader in a white nationalist hate group who finds healing from the people he once hated – a Muslim heart doctor and his town of refugees. The film is set in the most diverse square mile in America – Clarkston, Georgia – and follows a Syrian Kurd, a former Klansman, and a town of refugees who seek belonging in a country that blames them for its problems. Swimming against the current of an increasingly polarized and isolated America, each must decide whether they will risk knowing and being known by those who oppose them.

Ultimately, *Refuge (2023)* uncovers what is possible when we leave the security of our tribes and what is at stake for our country if we don't. Arno will lead a discussion of the 70-minute film as we find inspiration and hope in reconciling with others.

APRIL 11

DISMANTLING ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Arno Michaelis will share his own story as he gives a talk encouraging us to trust that reconciliation and peace are possible, even in a world that is not safe for a Jewish person these days. As the Israel-Hamas war continues, it's even more important to find peace and forgiveness and work to bridge the chasm of hatred. Drawing on his dark past as a former violent racist neo-Nazi skinhead, driven by antisemitism, Michaelis learned how to turn away from hate and neo-Nazism and find a path working to counter extremism. Hate is fed from fear, and Michaelis is eager to share how dismantling hate changes life. The evening concludes with a thoughtful Q & A session.

APRIL 18

RACE AND THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH: A LIGHT SHINES FROM A DARK PAST

The Episcopal Church, like most other denominations, is trying to reconcile its past with its present and hope-filled future. Dr. Devin Burns, who recently earned her doctorate in American Religious History from The Florida State University, will share our church's history with the Confederacy, slavery and white supremacy. Her research will challenge us to see the truth of the past so that we can continue to work for racial reconciliation as we Build Beloved Community in the Episcopal Church today and tomorrow. If we don't start with St. Mark's, where do we begin? Devin will help us find ways to continue helpful and authentic dialogue that build bridges of hope, uniting us under the umbrella of Christ's love for all people.