

## 2020 Offerings to Churches

David Weiss is eager to bring his work as a public theologian\* into your congregation on a Sunday morning or another time that works for your community. Here is a sampling of forums and workshops David can offer—and he'll happily work to adapt any of these to your specific interests. All presentations include time for Q&A.

\* **Public theology:** thinking out loud about God, grace, and the issues we face today so that we are able to live lives of deeper faith with greater conviction.

- **AT HOME ON EARTH—Christian Spirituality in a Time of Climate Crisis. *On becoming an apocalyptic evangelical prophetic church.*** No issue will challenge the church or our personal faith more than the looming climate crisis. Alongside the science and technology, public policy and personal choices, our faith can help frame a response that lets us live with conviction, purpose, and meaning even as we face the most rigorous challenge of our lifetime. Offered in a condensed single session, a three-part series, or a half-day/full day retreat. *This is the heart of David's current focus as public theologian.*
  - (60-240+ minutes)
- **When God Was A Little Girl—a Cosmology for our Generation.** Built around David's award-winning children's book, this presentation invites us to consider how the stories that shape our earliest thinking also become the infrastructure for our adult imaginations. Far from "simply" a children's story, this tale is playfully subversive and profoundly theological. Although a children book, this presentation is aimed at adults. As a workshop, it invites participants (either adults or teens) to imagine their own cosmology.
  - (60 minutes presentation / 90 minutes workshop)
- **Faith Development—Understanding the Texture of Meaning in Our Lives.** Although we tend to think of "faith" as "what we believe," it can be more insightfully understood as *how* we make meaning in our lives. From this perspective, *to be human is to be a person of faith.* Various religious traditions (and non-religious traditions) provide the words and tones with which we weave meaning. Drawing on theology, psychology, moral development, and more, this presentation offers a life-changing glimpse at the nature of faith—and at the shape of faith in your own life. Offered in a condensed single session, in two parts, or as a half-day workshop.
  - (60-240 minutes)
- **Who Do You Say That I Am? Keeping Company With Jesus Today.** Progressive Christians do Jesus a favor by embracing his humanity ... but often more because of our discomfort with miraculous claims than because we find his humanity so compelling. Informed by historical research this presentation offers a portrait of Jesus that will make you glad to tell others why you count yourself among the followers of Jesus today. Offered as a single session or (with more depth) in two parts.
  - (60-120 minutes)
- **Holding the Word Lightly: Poetry as a Tabernacle for the Holy.** One way the tabernacle of the ancient Hebrews was more hospitable to God was in its ability to billow with Spirit. Both temples and dogmatic theology can tempt us to imagine we have God at our beck and call. If God is still speaking, perhaps poetry is a genre uniquely suited to speak of God with room left for the Spirit to billow between the lines. David shares a variety of his own theological poetry as sparks for further reflection and conversation.
  - (60 minutes)
- **Acrostic Poetry: Bearing Witness ... at the Edge of Faith.** Acrostic poetry is a playful form that uses the first letter of each line to carry a hidden message down the left margin of the poem. Easily written but with unlimited depth to them, acrostics are ideal for exploring those facets of faith and life that only come out in the stillness. For a decade David taught acrostic workshops to schoolchildren at the Young Authors Conference. In this workshop (tailored to adults or youth) he teaches the basic "skill" of the acrostic poem, shares a few of his own, and then invites participants to craft their own acrostic.
  - (60-90 minutes)

- **Paying It Forward: My Journey as an Ally into the Welcoming Story of Scripture.** Even (maybe especially!) in welcoming congregations, there remains a deep hunger to become biblically literate and theologically articulate—as lay people—about *why* our welcome to LGBTQ persons is so full. David’s story, told in a compelling narrative, is rich with biblical imagery and theological insight.
  - (60 minutes)
- **Singing Welcome ... Imagining Justice: An “annotated” Hymnsing.** David has written more than a dozen fresh hymn texts (that use familiar hymn tunes) that aim to set words on “the tune of a welcoming God.” Ideally offered in a sanctuary with music to accompany the 8-12 hymns to be sung, David introduces each one with a bit of its backstory and theological architecture. Not only are these hymns sung with deeper meaning, curiosity and attentiveness will be peaked toward all hymns.
  - (60-75 minutes)
- **JUST GOOD SEX: Ethics for Flourishing on the Far Side of Welcome.** When we affirm a wide embrace of diverse sexuality does that mean “all the rules” have been erased? No. We are *called* to be bodied. So how do we make choices that honor God’s intent for us to flourish ... on the far side of welcome and within a *vocation* of embodiment? Can biblically-informed principles (not rules) offer guidance across our diverse experiences as we seek to be faith-full in our sexuality? Hint: it’s complicated ... but YES.
  - (60 minutes)
- **The Body as Burning Bush: Coming Out and Other Holy Acts of Human Sexuality.** Originally crafted to honor National Coming Out Day (October 11), this presentation situates sexuality as one holy dimension of our humanity. With evocative imagery and a brief overview of sexual ethics.
  - (60 minutes)

**Bio: David R. Weiss** is an itinerant public theologian with graduate degrees in theology (Wartburg Seminary) and Christian ethics (Notre Dame). His work focuses on sexuality, diversity, peace, and climate crisis. Blessed with a love of words, a passion for justice, and a deep sense of vocation—he and the church haven’t known exactly what to do with each other. After teaching college religion part-time for twenty years, he now writes and speaks as a “public theologian” called to “think the faith” out loud in conversation with the wider church and the public. His essays have appeared in newspapers across the Midwest; his daily devotions have been carried in both U.S. and Canadian publications; and he’s made dozens of presentations for churches, colleges, and community groups in sixteen states. His writings include *When God Was a Little Girl* (children’s book); *Memories of the Meal* and *Sparks Around the Fire* (both Lenten chancel dramas); *Hearts Unbound* (Reader’s Theater on LGBTQ welcome); *To the Tune of a Welcoming God* (essays on LGBTQ welcome)—and a CD of the same name featuring new hymn texts. David is active in congregational life at St. Paul’s UCC on Summit Ave. He and his wife, Margaret, live in St. Paul. Their blended family includes six children and nine grandchildren. They like keeping close company with creation and their household has had dogs, cats, birds, fish, guinea pigs, hamsters, and even worms. Their home, like their life, is fairly cluttered with joy.

**Rates\*:**

60 minutes - \$150; 90 minutes - \$225; 120 minutes - \$300; 180 minutes - \$450; 240 minutes - \$500

David is a self-employed writer and public theologian. Income from presentations is his livelihood. Yet he is absolutely committed to sharing his work with faith communities of all means. *If affordability is an issue, please open a discussion.*

David R. Weiss - Pronouns: He/Him/His

Public Theologian - working ... writing ... speaking on behalf of God’s people & God’s creation