

Good morning,

My name is Julien Lafleur and I'm a Worship Associate at this church. That seems funny to me because I'm an atheist and at most churches, the two don't go together.

I told one of my Worship Associate friends about my beliefs (or lack of them) and he said two things. The first was "Julien, I just can't relate to not believing in God." I love that about this church; there are probably as many versions of spirituality in here as there are people and that leads me to the second thing this guy said: "Even though I don't relate to what you believe, I relate to you."

This church is so very different from the one I grew up in. I was raised in a church that had all the answers, and by "all the answers," they *meant* "all the answers". I don't want you to get the wrong idea about them. They were (and are) very kind and generous, but when it came down

to it, I had questions and their answers didn't satisfy me. Perhaps even more tellingly, I lost interest in my own questions.

Plus I hated all the singing.

I tried calling myself agnostic for a while, but by my early twenties, I had fully embraced the fact that I was more Han Solo than Luke Skywalker: As Han Solo said to Luke, "Kid, I've flown from one side of this galaxy to the other. I've seen a lot of strange stuff, but I've never seen anything to make me believe there's one all-powerful Force controlling everything." And that's pretty much how I still feel.

Whether it's true or not, I sometimes feel marginalized in spiritual conversations. "You're not *spiritual*," I hear people saying, "you don't think there's anything beyond what science can prove."

I guess that's true... except I see the wonder of the stars, the beauty of a laser, and the precision of the migrating monarch butterflies as spiritual, connecting me to the mysterious.

Just because I believe the universe can be answered using a finite set of tools does not mean I have solved anything. I struggle with what I think are the same kinds questions that we all struggle with. How can I be the best father, the best husband, the best friend? What do I do when I'm not the best father, husband or friend?

How can I help?

Why am I here?

So, why am I here? And what do I tell people when they ask about my church? I tell them we're covenantal, not creedal, and then they say "what does 'creedal' mean?" Then I get to explain what boils down to "we need not think

alike to love alike,” one of my favorite refrains in this church.

I tell them that I come here for the questions. We’re all looking for answers, how to be the best spouse, parent, child, person. Before you can find an answer, I say, you need to have a question.

This church is pretty good at asking questions and then letting me find my own answers. My answers may be different from your answers (unless yours happen to include a lot of Star Wars references), and that’s OK.

Regardless, in this church, I have found an answer to one of my questions, “how can I help?” I help (and receive help) by sustaining a place where we all can travel our own paths.

When I’m here I get questions and the space to explore.

Plus, I really like the music.