

Nerd Chapel: Boldly Evangelizing Where No Man Has Gone Before

by Kate and Kimmie Holtrop

Started by Eric Anderson in 2013, Nerd Chapel celebrated its tenth anniversary, Friday through Sunday, June 23-25, 2023. The celebration began with a cookout and party at Pomona Park on Friday. The cookout was accompanied by a cosplay contest and author/artist convention, author readings, and nerd trivia quizzes with prizes. On Saturday, a prayer meeting was held at All Shores Wesleyan Church in Spring Lake, followed by a Star Wars-themed brunch, and tabletop gaming. On Sunday, a worship service was held along with a potluck and more games at Unity Reformed Church, wrapping up the three-day celebration.



As both a Christian and a nerd, Eric wanted Nerd Chapel to bridge the gap between the nerd community and the Christian community. Through this ministry, Eric has discovered a way to connect to nerds that are unsure about their interest in religion, as well as those who are already following Jesus. According to professional writer and podcaster Nathan Marchand, “We believe that Truth with a capital T can be found in all nerds’ /geeks’ favorite hobbies and stories. You just have to look hard enough. Perhaps that’s why many of us bury ourselves in them: we’re trying to find that elusive Truth.”

Eric decided that one of the ways to minister to his fellow nerds was to write about the connections between Scripture and nerd culture. In doing so, he is writing a series of 42-day devotionals, entitled 42. The title of the series was inspired by *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, the novel by Douglas Adams, in which the “Answer to the Great Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything, is Forty-two.”

The series, co-authored with Nathan Marchand and Darrin Ball, among other of Eric’s friends, uses scenarios from a variety of classic nerd fiction to illustrate and support Biblical principles. Darrin Ball added that looking for elements of truth in stories is important, as “it’s going to point to Christ, because Christ is the ultimate truth... All truth is contained within Him.”

In an interview at the Pomona Park Party, Eric noted that Nerd Chapel “helps people take what they know (their nerdy interests and hobbies), and use what they know to learn about the Bible,” building a point of understanding with people who normally wouldn’t have an understanding of religion, or people who have had bad experiences related to religion.

Currently, 42 includes three books, with a fourth on the way: *42: Discovering Faith Through Fandom*; *The New 42: God Terraforms All Things*; and *The Fantastic 42: A Fellowship Facing Doom with Hope*.

Other Nerd Chapel ministry opportunities include a monthly Game Day event, held at All Shores Wesleyan Church. “The whole point of those [Game Days] is to build community,” said Eric. He also helps lead a worship service at the annual Gen Con in Indianapolis, hosted by the Christian Gamers Guild.



For more information or to join Nerd Chapel, visit [NerdChapel.com](https://www.facebook.com/NerdChapel) or visit their Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/NerdChapel>.



Muskegon Area District Library Joins Forces with NEA Big Read Lakeshore for a Spectacular Literary Extravaganza

Muskegon County, October & November 2023 - The Muskegon Area District Library (MADL) is thrilled to announce its exciting partnership with NEA Big Read Lakeshore, a vibrant community-wide reading initiative that promises to ignite the love of reading across Ottawa, Allegan, and Muskegon counties. This extraordinary collaboration, in conjunction with over 100 dedicated community partners along the Lakeshore, takes place annually throughout the months of October and November.

NEA Big Read Lakeshore, founded by Hope College and generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, is a program that celebrates the power of literature to connect communities. It invites Lakeshore residents of all ages to come together, share, and explore the themes and topics of specially selected books. This shared reading experience serves as a catalyst for learning, listening, and connecting with one another, fostering a deeper sense of community. The titles for 2023 are as follows:

- Big Read: *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi
- Middle Read: *New Kid* by Jerry Craft
- Little Read: *Change Sings* written by Amanda Gorman and illustrated by Loren Long
- Mini Read: *The More We Get Together* written by Celeste Cortwright and illustrated by Betania Zacarias

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