



WITTENBERG DOOR
-----CAMPUS MINISTRY-----

**HISTORY
INTEGRITY
TRUTH
SCRIPTURE**

www.wittenbergcomo.com



**March 30, 2026
From the Wittenberg Door News Desk**

2/24/26 -What's the Point of the "Door"?

I wish I fielded this question more often than I do. When people hear about Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry, aside from spelling "Wittenberg" incorrectly, they are often focused on the location, where Martin Luther was used by God to kick off much of the Reformation.

But what's the point of the door itself? In medieval Europe, and at many other places and times, the door of a church was regularly used as a place to post announcements. Is there going to be a special service? A festival? A concert, or a debate? Because the local church was a place nearly everybody would go, and certainly was at a prominent location in a community, the main entrance door also served as a bulletin board.



On October 31, 1517, Dr. Martin Luther posted 95 topics for debate, hoping to encourage some lively discussion on November 1, a civil and religious holiday. As it turned out, the topics didn't catch on for that year's All Saints' Day festival. They, did, however, spark eventual discussion, particularly regarding whether it was appropriate to charge money for forgiveness. The discussion also, incidentally, led to Luther's removal from his orders as an Augustinian monk and from the Roman priesthood.

When we founded Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry, the point of the door was to signify that there are plenty of things to discuss and debate in this world. Free and fair discussion has been central to the flourishing of Christianity, as well as to the development of Western civilization.

It's interesting to me that frequently in the New Testament, though many of our translations of the text favor language about "preaching" or "teaching," the language often used for public discourse is more closely related to that of having a dispute or a reasoned discussion. For that matter, the terminology John uses at the start of his Gospel refers to God the Son as the "logos" of God. That's often translated as "word" but it is a term frequently used for an argument or a reasoned speech. Significantly, it's also the word used for a financial statistical report.

There's something inherently reasonable about the Christian faith. And there are particular ways that a Christian understanding of the world informs culture, political, economic, and philosophical discussions, as well as the pursuits we would refer to as "hard science." In the end, all of our investigation involves asking questions of the world around us. That questioning, as well as our understanding of the answers to the questions, is rightly informed by our understanding of what

we have known beforehand. God's Word in Scripture, and God's actions in history are crucial to understanding the world that we believe is created by God.

So we ask questions. We need to put items for debate and discussion up on that Wittenberg Door. Let's pursue truth together.

3/5/26 Introducing Our Alumni Coordinator

In past years, Wittenberg Door has had only a limited number of people from our local Lutheran congregations who have stepped forward to join us in our desire to care for others with Christ's love. It's always been part of our desire, but for one reason or another it didn't really happen.

However, after several years of interactions, we're very glad to introduce our first-ever Alumni Coordinator, Weiping Gong, originally from Beijing! With a past history of teaching English to Chinese people, Weiping came to Mizzou in 2024 to begin a new adventure. She answered an invitation to one of our dinner and conversation evenings, and has since then not only become very involved with our campus ministry community, but also with the congregation of Alive in Christ Lutheran Church! She's the proud mother of a son who attends Rock Bridge Senior High here in Columbia.

Weiping has a great track record as one of the people who networks with other Christians, as well as with those who aren't Christians, in the community. She's very good at staying in touch with others via social media and a variety of other means of communication, building and maintaining caring friendships regardless of physical location on the planet!

What will she be doing as our Alumni Coordinator? Her goal is to build a network of people who have been involved in Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry in the past. We have a number of people, mostly who came here from other countries, and many of whom have returned to their native countries. They're still part of the Wittenberg Door family! I'm hoping Weiping can help us all know about important milestones in the lives of our "graduates." How are the children doing? How are the careers going? What are people publishing? What have they been doing since they were in Columbia? Are they sending more people in this direction?

Networking like this helps people from our past meet people from our present, as well. Who knows what doors can be opened in lives when we make friends with others who have similar interests? Who knows when one person's milestone will bring encouragement and inspiration to someone else? The possibilities are virtually endless. It even crosses my mind that as we bring people with similar specialties together, sometime in the future we might sponsor special live or virtual seminars, discussions, or other collaborative efforts.

Drawing our alumni together is something we've never done in a systematic way. We've got about ten years of catching up to do. We'll be pulling information about people from Wittenberg Door's past together, and Pastor Spotts will be helping Weiping get in contact with our alumni. We plan to set up a special password-protected area at www.wittenbergcomo.com for our alumni in the near future. We hope to get some conversation going using WhatsApp as well.

I'm excited about the possibilities here! I look forward to what Weiping can do as she helps us stay in touch!



3/5/26 Financial Update

As announced in our last newsletter, we're planning to provide more frequent financial updates via print newsletters and blog posts. Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is able to operate only because of the generosity of our supporters. It's important that we increase our support base so as to keep bringing face-to-face pastoral care to the campus communities here in Columbia!

As of March 5, we've received about 4% of our annual budget. This clearly has us considerably behind, not only compared to annual needs, but also compared to recent years. It is not all doom and gloom, as there are several congregations that have historically given on a quarterly basis, and we are still in the first quarter of the year.

We'd like to gain more support from local congregations as well as people who have received our care in the past. Please consider bringing this ministry to the attention of anyone who would like to consider support. Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

3/9/26 In Memoriam



In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, the apostle discusses the importance of those who would seem to be lacking in honor. As a shorthand we'll often refer to the passage as speaking of "weaker members." The irony, however, is that those "weaker members" are often incredibly strong.

In 2014, when Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry was being founded, one of the people we ran into was Harry Besleme. Since he was a Lutheran and was involved in the Mizzou community, I managed to have lunch with him one day. I was telling him about how our work on campus is not only with students, but with faculty, staff, and administrators. We work with people of every national background, every level of learning, every pay grade. Harry was listening carefully, and interjected, "and every kind of personality." Yes, absolutely!

For almost twelve years, Harry was one of our most involved participants. His personality often sank into the background. His care about others didn't. He was at the heart of many of our decisions to involve those Paul talked about in 1 Corinthians 12. We have self-consciously created an atmosphere in which people with children can thrive. We have self-consciously acted in ways that would be inclusive of people with mental or physical challenges that make it difficult to participate in today's academic world. We have purposely welcomed those the Bible would call the least of God's children. Harry kept that goal on the front burner of all our planning. Those "weaker members" are important enough for God's salvation. They better be important enough for us to care about them.

On March 4th, Harry called in sick at work. That in itself was not like him. He was always at work. The next day, he didn't call in, and he missed several appointments. Again, this was not like him. Sadly, he was found dead at his home. Harry, who was a joyous partaker of forgiveness, life, and salvation through Christ as experienced in the Lutheran tradition, was taken to his eternal home sometime on March 4th or 5th of 2026.

Our hearts go out to the many people whose lives he touched. He leaves behind family members, as well as friends and co-workers who considered him part of the family. Our lives will not be the same.

As the apostle Paul taught us in 1 Corinthians 12, we continue to strive to love one another, particularly those who appear weaker, those who are not as readily honored by our culture as some, those Jesus would call the least in the kingdom of heaven, and therefore people worthy of honor and esteem.

Upcoming Events

Thursdays, 1 pm - Bible Discussion for All Comers - Mizzou Student Center

Thursdays, 5 pm - Bible Study at Beta Sigma Psi

Friday, April 3 - Dinner Cancelled, Go to Church!

Sunday, April 5 - Rejoice! Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

Friday, April 17, 6-8 pm - Dinner and Conversation Evening at the Spotts' House

Sunday, April 19, 2-4 pm - Pastor Spotts at LWML Rally, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Centralia MO

Friday, May 1, 6-8 pm - Dinner and Conversation Evening at the Spotts' House

Wednesday, May 6 through Saturday, May 9 - Pastor Spotts at Fort Sill, OK for graduation

Sunday, May 10, 11 am Beta Sigma Psi Sunday at Campus Lutheran Church, Columbia MO

Sunday, May 24 - Pastor Spotts at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Waseca, MN

Monday and Tuesday, June 22-23 - Pastor Spotts at TAALC Clergy Commission, Plymouth, MN

Tuesday June 23 through Friday, June 26 - Pastor Spotts at TAALC General Convention, Plymouth, MN

Remember to get your church on my calendar!

Watch the calendar at www.wittenbergcomo.com, follow our Facebook page, and friend WDCM Chaplain on Facebook to see times and places where Pastor Spotts can be found around campuses in coffee shops or restaurants!

We always have something new at the website, the blog, and the activities calendar. Please be a friend on Facebook and follow us on X. If you're in Columbia, let's get together on or near campus. Go to wittenbergcomo.com to provide financial support. The Wittenberg Door 300 needs you!