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# LENTEN SUNDAY SCHOOL COURSE

10:05-10:45AM, SUNDAYS IN SUMNERS HALL

**A Wide Door of Opportunity**  
**Parish Fellowship, Our Present Moment, and New Possibilities**

# “A WIDE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY”

## 1 CORINTHIANS 16.7-9

- For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost because a wide door of opportunity has opened for me, and there are many adversaries.

# THE DECLINE OF THE MAINLINE CHURCH

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>2010</u>
<b>Disciples of Christ</b>	1,801,821	1,156,458	910,297	691,160
<b>Episcopal</b>	3,269,325	2,794,143	2,536,550	2,057,292
<b>Lutheran (LCA,ELCA)</b>	3,053,243	2,925,655	5,180,910	4,633,887
<b>Presbyterian</b>	4,202,956	3,157,273	3,637,375	2,844,952
<b>United Church of Christ</b>	2,241,134	1,716,723	1,452,565	1,111,691
<b>United Methodist</b>	10,641,310	9,405,164	8,495,378	7,853,987

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## TRUE OR FALSE:

As the Church, our Times are Not a Temporary Interruption but a Permanent Disruption.



## TWO-PRONGED STRATEGY IN FACING ADAPTIVE CHALLENGE

- 1) Preserve, strengthen, and “double-down” on the non-negotiable, unique, and life-giving characteristics of SJD; carry forward the best of all that makes the parish what it is.
- 2) Encourage a culture of ministry innovation and experimentation for new expressions of SJD in our new day.

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# A WIDE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY

In this type of environment, the goal is to help people understand that the world is changing and that if they want to continue being faithful, they need to be open to new ways of thinking about their role in the world. For “traditional” churches that are strong and growing experimenting is about inviting them to use their existing strengths as a base to look toward God’s future, instead of waiting until they hit a crisis. If strong churches develop a missional vision, they will be able to support new models of church and mission with their resources.

Juan Martinez, “Discovering God’s Initiatives in the Midst of Adaptive Challenge,” Autumn 2012