September 28, 2017 ***Revisiting Vision, Part 2***  Milepost 194

 The congregation established three-year priorities in June:

***A STRUCTURE*** *which increases participation and flexibility;*

***GROWING*** *as individuals and as a community, in our walk with God, by the power of the Holy Spirit;*

***SHARING*** *God’s love, justice and peace beyond the congregation in part through increasing awareness of each other’s gifts and callings.*

All three priorities involve the discernment of spiritual gifts!

 Shalom is GROWING! New participants. More youth and children. Expanded outreach efforts in the neighborhood. Greater diversity. Stretching changes in structure. But…growing was not a priority during most of the transition period!

 With the exception of structure revision, most of the above growth dynamics took place apart from intentional efforts to implement the vision! My assessment: the Holy Spirit is working among us precisely because we established a growth oriented vision. Even though gave much attention to structure implementation in recent months, GROWING and SHARING are happening!

 Spiritual discipline focus begins at the Oct.14 retreat. Please share your spiritual discipline experiences and learnings in your small group, in sharing time on Sunday, and in *Journeying Together*!

 Greater clarity on spiritual gifts, passion and calling throughout the congregation will take time, but results among a few are already having an impact on congregational health. Individuals who already knew their passion and gift, but held back because there wasn’t a “slot” in the structure, have stepped up in helpful ways.

 Carefully led small groups are the best venue for discerning passion and spiritual gifts. Yes, it’s a long-term strategy.

 Next week: SHARING -Gary Martin