Feb. 23, 2017 ***The Spirit of Truth*** Milepost 299

On the night Jesus was betrayed, he said to his disciples: *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come* (John 16:13).

Later, in explaining to Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world, Jesus said: *For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice* (John 18:37).

All denominations struggle to integrate and balance Tradition, Word, and Spirit. Anabaptism was born as a reaction against a corrupted Tradition, and hence created a theology which integrated Word and Spirit. Over the centuries, Mennonites have maintained a focus on the Word, but have allowed a new Tradition to replace the Spirit.

I have observed a renewed desire at Shalom, to bring the Holy Spirit into greater focus in congregational life. It came through the vision

groups, and is in the proposed vision statement to be presented this Sunday. As Jesus promised his disciples, the Holy Spirit is guiding us into all the truth. While being *guided into all the truth* is lifetime process, new signs of Holy Spirit guidance are appearing at Shalom.

* 16 leaders, representing many congregational households, have been guided by the Spirit into discerning a congregational vision

over the last four weeks, from congregational input in January.

* The Spirit guided the pastors into a sermon series on Ephesians,

which is guiding us toward deeper understandings of Christ’s call to be a barrier-breaking community.

* The Spirit is guiding us to new connections within the neighborhood, creating opportunities to put words into action.
* The Spirit is guiding us toward clearer structural patterns, which free up energy for increased outreach.
* The Spirit is guiding us toward greater focus on discerning spiritual gifts and callings, and desires for growing together into Christ.

This sounds like what Jesus said the Spirit would do: *declare to you the things that are to come!* -Gary Martin