



# Galena UMC

## Recovery & ReTurn Report

December 9, 2020 Week #26

### Galena's ReTurn Team

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### Weekly Update ... *from Dale*

I did run across an interesting look at church reopening this week and I would like to take a minute to share this with you. I thought that it was an interesting angle to compare church reopening with a roadmap and it seems to be appropriate for several reasons. First, it is because we have a clear starting point and destination and along the way there will be some expected checkpoints and mile-markers.

But also, like any good set of travel plans, there is always the possibility that we will hit some unanticipated delays or necessary detours on our journey. Because the circumstances around the pandemic are ever-changing, there may be some unforeseen future developments that will affect our plans and cause us to readjust our route accordingly.

But the good news is, no matter how many tweaks we must make to our roadmap or if the estimated time of arrival is altered, the destination never changes. Our ultimate goal is to have our building open and our missions and ministries resumed, so we can continue to live out our calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Of course, if there is one thing we've learned in the process of creating this roadmap, it would be that reopening the doors of a church is different than any other business or organization. After all, our ultimate responsibility isn't to shareholders, revenues, bottom lines, or profits; it's to God and taking care of God's people.

What that means then, at the very least, is that our guidelines for reopening have to be shaped by far more than state laws or federal mandates, but by Jesus' greatest commandment to "love God and love your neighbor as yourself."

***Texas Coronavirus Prevention: Wash your hands like you just got done slicing jalapeños for a batch of nachos and you need to take your contacts out.***

### Notes ...*from Charlene*

"Staying in touch" continues to be the only good thing coming out of this pandemic. In conversations with our members, most still would be uncomfortable attending services in our building at this time. The more we can hold our church family close, the better it feels, whether it's by phone calls or notes. We really are all in this together.

## **Medical Tip of the Week ...from Dennis**

**CORONAVIRUS**



### **The vaccine is on the way. I ~~can~~ CANNOT let my guard down.**

As worn down as we all are by the pandemic, the disruptions to our church life, to our holiday plans, and with all other aspects of our lives, this is not the time to let down your guard. This is the time to redouble your efforts to remain safe. Most of us will not be in line to get the vaccine for many months. Remember these things. We are in the midst of the worst phase of the pandemic to date and it is forecast to only get worse over the next two months. We do not know yet how effective the vaccine really is and what the side effect profile is. Just today there are reports of serious allergic reactions in two healthcare workers in the U.K. who received the shot this week. We are told that the vaccines are 90-95% effective at preventing serious illness. Are they effective in preventing infection in the first place? Can a person who has been immunized still be a spreader of virus? How long will the immunity last? Is it “better” immunity than you would get if you have recovered from an infection with Covid19? None of these things are known. The data from Pfizer and Moderna has not been peer reviewed by scientists unrelated to these two companies or the FDA. A lot is yet to be learned. Most of these questions will be answered in due course, but not this winter. In the meantime, wear your mask as recommended by the CDC, wash your hands, don't touch your face, avoid crowds especially indoors, and socially distance at all times. Stay safe!

## **Update from the County ...from Jay**

County COVID numbers 1,178

GALENA—As of Monday, Dec. 7, Jo Daviess County reported 1,179 COVID-19 cases since the spring.

There were 25 new cases since Dec. 4 and 93 new cases since Nov. 30.

Approximately 1,050 of these cases have recovered. There have been 21 deaths in the county since the start of the pandemic, with six since last Monday.

As of Saturday, Dec. 5, the three highest areas in Jo Daviess County for COVID have been 354 cases in the 61036 zip code (Galena), 218 cases in the 61085 zip code (Stockton) and 183 cases in the 61025 zip code (East Dubuque).

## **Blessings ... from Pastor Catiana**

Friends, the world feels upside-down. Even Advent has a new twist with its stay-at-home proclamation! Yet as we prepare to encounter Joy Sunday, we have an opportunity to stretch our hearts with exuberance, song, and deep grace. The twist or choice is how we allow our interactions and energy with the Spirit to radiate for God is with us whether we're physically face to face or looking into one's eyes through the technical gifts of today! One suggestion for “Joy Sunday” is to embrace a “gentle joy”. Be gentle with yourselves and with each other. We are all vulnerable and in need of Mary's gentle touch. A gentle openness to the pain of waiting. Waiting for restored health. Waiting for justice. The gentle but aware act of waiting holds us so that we can then rise up through the pain and do what's right, proclaiming the joy of a truly liberated world turned aright.

**Remember: Do No Harm ... Do Good ... Stay in Love with God!**

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13*