



Galena UMC Recovery & ReTurn Report

April 14, 2021 Week #43

Weekly Update ... from Dale

Galena's ReTurn Team

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Our return committee members remain in agreement that we will be “reopening” with caution. As we have stated previously, we will really begin this “reopening” with outdoor services on May 23rd at Rec Park and we will cautiously proceed from that point. We will share more specific details about our May 23rd service as that approaches..... but **mark your calendar!**

For years and years, we have preached that the church is not a building. We’ve told people not just to come to a service but go into the world. There are churches that have signs on their doors as people are walking out that say, “You are now entering the mission field” or “go be the church.” Even as we moved online, we encouraged our members to “be the church,” warning them against reducing everything to a livestream or online service.

So, what does it say if on the very front end when we can meet again, we rush back?

Churches that hurry back to worship will give members the perception that they need the public gathering to truly be the church. So all the things we have been telling them all along about church happening, wherever you are, will sound hypocritical now.

I know we want to gather. I know we want to meet again. And that is a good thing. But if we make it all about the meeting, then we are reinforcing the opposite of what we’ve been trying to teach. It doesn't mean that the gatherings are unimportant or that they are not crucial to who we are. We don't want to give people the wrong idea... that we cannot be who we need to be without gathering in a building.

Maybe this time of waiting is an opportunity.

To reset.

To rest.

To reevaluate.

To refocus.

And to come back better.

The following are actual church bulletin bloopers found in churches across the United States.

The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30 p.m. Please use the back door.

Medical Tip of the Week ...from Dennis

CORONAVIRUS

What a “Messy Middle” looks like

If you recall last week, I characterized our current journey through this pandemic as “muddling through a messy middle”. The Director of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington in Seattle gave a presentation last Thursday, April 8, where he offered support for this assessment. The IHME has been monitoring and modeling the pandemic since early last year. Their forecasts have been pretty accurate. Their current model shows us moving into a quiet summer with decreased infections and deaths with more outdoor activity and more vaccinated people. But there will be fewer protective behaviors. It is human nature. As we move into the winter the concern is that there will be a new surge fueled by new variants arising in unvaccinated parts of the world that will not be particularly responsive to the current vaccines compounded by the natural tendency to let our guard down. They are concerned about a double surge meaning a spike in influenza as well as Covid19.

Stay tuned for more information as the story unfolds. We still have a long way to go, probably well into 2022 or even into 2023 before this pandemic is brought under control. In the interval there will be a lot of chasing our tails and playing “Whack-A-Mole”. Like I said, I predict that it will be messy. If you are fully vaccinated you are certainly safer than you were a few months ago. Nevertheless, do not let your guard all the way down. Remember the immortal words of Pogo, “We have met the enemy and he is us”. Be careful out there. Stay safe!

Notes ...from Charlene Let us continue our phone calls and notes. “Staying in touch” truly blesses both the giver and the receiver especially in this time of pandemic. Hold our church family close. We are all in this together.

Update from the County ...from Jay

The Illinois Department of Public Health has open vaccine eligibility to those 16 and over. As of Monday, April 12, those 16 and old can get their first dose of the two two-dose vaccines. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is not yet approved for all those 16 and older.

Mass vaccination site and pharmacy appointments for the week of Monday, April 12, will be released over the coming days across Cook and the collar counties.

More than 80 counties have opened eligibility to all individuals age 16 and over in advance of the April 12 timeline, as more and more residents take advantage of the more than 1,000 vaccination locations operating across the state. This includes retail pharmacies, local health department sites, state-supported mass vaccination sites, federally qualified health centers, critical access hospitals, safety net hospitals, mobile sites, rural outreach and rapid response vaccination teams.

To date, 73 percent of Illinois seniors and 42 percent of Illinoisans 16 and over have had at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. One quarter of the 16 and over population is fully vaccinated.

Blessings...from Pastor Catiana

Stay safe...stay kind...stay curious. We have a ways to go but we are not alone! See God in the stranger!

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