



Galena UMC

Recovery & ReTurn Report

June 9, 2021 Week #51

Galena's ReTurn Team

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Weekly Update ... from Dale

When COVID-19 shutdowns began in 2020, many churches thought it would mean missing out on a couple of Sundays. Even in those early weeks of the pandemic, we longed to be off our couches and back in our familiar sanctuaries for worship. We imagined hugging everyone, worshipping shoulder to shoulder, walking forward for Communion, and lingering for small talk and “coffee hour”.

We know how the rest of this story goes. The pandemic extended month after month. By 2021, most Protestant churches in the United States were meeting either at a significantly reduced capacity or not at all.

Thanks to vaccines and falling infection rates, things are changing. This spring and summer, churches (including ours) will

move from meeting virtually to meeting in person, from outside to inside. God willing, we are getting to a place where we can meet on Sunday mornings without the risk of spreading the virus that has dominated our lives.

But the odds are that our return will not look like the crowded reunions we once imagined. When churches reopen, there will still be precautions, and families will come back gradually, depending on their own health concerns, newfound worship habits, and consciences.

We will also be faced with our own mixed emotions. We will likely feel triumph and heartache at once. Returning to the rhythms of worship prompts us to remember the Sundays and holidays we missed. Part of celebrating finally being together is grieving the time we spent worshipping apart from each other. Just a precaution: Returning to church may not be the celebration we once imagined.

In his beautiful book, “I Shall Not Want,” Robert Ketchum tells of a Sunday School teacher who asked her group of children if anyone could quote the entire 23rd Psalm. A golden-haired, four-and-a-half-year-old girl was among those who raised their hands.

*A bit skeptical, the teacher asked if she could really quote the entire psalm. The little girl came to the front of the room, faced the class, made a perky little bow, and said, “**The Lord is my shepherd, that’s all I want.**” She bowed again and went and sat down.*

That may well be the greatest interpretation of the 23rd Psalm ever heard.

Notes ...from Charlene ... As we continue our in-persons gatherings, let us not forget how important our phone calls and notes are. “Staying in touch” truly blesses both the giver and the receiver in all times. Heart connections never grow old. Hold our church family close.

Trustee Report By Dennis

Countdown to Reopening July 11 – 4 Weeks to Go

We had a successful workday last Saturday. Thank you to everyone who helped with a very special shoutout to Darcy Muehleip who stayed the whole day. Thank you everybody!

Sherry will be scheduling additional workdays to tackle the Fellowship Hall, storeroom, and kitchen. We can use all willing hands. This is our chance to do some really deep cleaning, sorting, and decluttering!

The carpet in the sanctuary will be cleaned this week. In addition to the carpet, all 46 cushions on the pews, the kneeling cushions, and the four large chairs on the dais will be cleaned.

Following the carpet cleaning, the new AV equipment will be installed and we will be trained in its use. The new equipment will enable live streaming of the Sunday services as well as other events and programs held in the sanctuary.

There is a lot of work to be done to prepare for reopening; it is more than just opening the doors. We hope that you can help with one or more of the workdays Sherry is scheduling. The Leadership Board thanks you in advance for your help. Come one, come all.

Update ...from Jay

From the Jo Daviess County Health Department:

- There is 1 person in isolation with active disease.
- There are 5 people in quarantine
- There are no additional clinics at Midwest Medical Center planned as the need at this time for mass clinics has greatly decreased. The department is collaborating with the local pharmacies on their efforts and if the need arises that additional clinic are needed.
- The CDC covid data tracker as of 06/03: 12,375 fully vaccinated (58.3% of total population), % of population 18 and over is 70.9%, % of population 12 y/o and over is 66%, % of population 65 and over is 98.8%
- Current inventory: 220 doses of Moderna and 45 doses of Janssen (J/J)

Blessings ... from Pastor Catiana

We're all "past ready" to return to worship within our historic sanctuary. I thank the many who are helping to insure that we return to a safe, clean space for us to center in as the Body of Christ in action, sharing the spirit of love and service with our community and thus, the world.

Some of the most important things churches can be doing as they begin to gather in person is to encourage people to be vaccinated, debunk myths about vaccinations and vaccines, and encourage continued protective behaviors.

Remember, as we begin gathering in physical space again, there will be modifications, and protective behaviors. Expect these modifications to continue for a significant amount of time, as we continue to make healthy decision-making one of our priorities.

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