



# Galena UMC Recovery & ReTurn Report

August 18, 2021 Week #56

## Weekly Update ... from Dale

### Galena's ReTurn Team

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Pastor Catiana McKay

### We will be masking up again.....

Our church as well as many houses of worship across the nation have allowed people to attend worship services without masks for several weeks now once most of our members were able to get vaccinated. But in the wake of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's latest guidance, many churches are weighing the benefits and potential backlash of mandating masks again.

On Tuesday, the CDC said that even vaccinated people should return to wearing masks indoors in areas with substantial or high rates of coronavirus transmission. The CDC also recommended that all people with a weakened immune system also wear a mask, regardless of the number of cases in their area. CDC urges vaccinated people in covid hot spots to resume wearing masks indoors. The latest question

around masks brings yet another round of debates over how to both return to worship and how to protect against a possible spread of the virus. Our state and county are now considered hot spots..... we don't want to be part of the problem; we want to be part of the solution.

Masking is controversial because there are people who won't come if it's mandated and then there are people who won't come if they don't think people are wearing masks consistently. With the delta variant, we need to up our game. Fighting covid is like playing soccer instead of football. You don't line up in a tidy line. The field is changing. Every two to three weeks you have variables to consider. You just say, "here's what we know now."

Across the nation, public health professionals are still working to persuade people to get the vaccine, including using religious appeals. The return committee has decided to have everyone mask up again. People may feel conflicted with this decision for a time because we want to believe in the progress we've made and the vaccinations so many of us have done. It can feel with a decision like this, that we're going backwards. But the latest CDC announcement gives us renewed confidence for this decision.

**CDC recommends that everyone, including fully vaccinated individuals, wear a mask in public indoor settings.**

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

The Gospel from John draws on the deep interconnection we all share as part of one vine. We are to love one another because what affects one, affects us all. The fruit that "lasts" is the fruit that is shared and multiplied in community for we are a global community. With renewed compassion, may we open our hearts for hospitality, so that in our welcoming, we will grow together in peace, & expand our chances for love, remembering our actions or inactions do have consequences.

## Medical Tip of the Week and more ..... By Dennis

### “It’s time to mask up again. We’re really not kidding!”

As of August 9, the CDC reports that more than 166,000,000 people in the US have been fully vaccinated. 72% of the population has received at least one shot. 99.9% of the people over the age of 65 in Jo Daviess County are fully vaccinated. Only 5,725 fully vaccinated people (0.0035%) have been hospitalized due to Covid19. Of these, 1,246 people (0.00077%) have died due to Covid19. The numbers are really tiny! If the vaccines are this effective, why mask up and why now?

- We are in a Covid19 surge due to the Delta variant. This variant is highly transmissible. Fully vaccinated people can and will be infected, by some estimates up to 30% of the fully vaccinated. Even if asymptomatic, fully vaccinated people infected with the Delta variant could shed up to 1,000 times the number of virus particles when compared to the original strain. Each of us can unknowingly be our own little “super spreader event” putting unvaccinated people, especially children, at risk. We should mask up inside with people we do not live with to limit the spread of the virus. It is good public health policy.
- Another really good reason is that a resistant variant could pop up. The more that the virus spreads and replicates, the more likely this is to happen. Again, it is good public health policy for us to do what we can do individually to help prevent the emergence of a vaccine resistant strain.

In just a few weeks fall begins and with it the start of the flu season. The risks will go up exponentially. Be safe. Follow the CDC guidelines. Mask up.

## Update from the County ...from Jay

According to the CDC Data as of Sunday, Aug. 15, 2021 Jo Daviess County has a high level of community transmission. CDC recommends that everyone, including fully vaccinated individuals, wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas with substantial and high transmission.

Jo Daviess County is reporting 11 additional COVID-19 cases since the report Thursday, Aug. 12. The regional seven-day rolling average positivity rate is at 6.4% and the county seven-day rolling average positivity rate is at 7.5%.

Since the pandemic started in March 2020, there have been 29 COVID-related deaths in Jo Daviess County. There are 11 active cases in the county.

The health department reports that 13,519 Jo Daviess County residents are fully vaccinated, a total of 63.7% of the population. There are 6,247 county residents 65 and older full vaccinated, or 99.9% of that demographic. About 76% of the population has at least one dose of vaccine.

**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.

**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<sub>2</sub>15:13*