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## *It's Been a Long Haul - Come Holy Spirit!*

**An article for the *Cathedral Times* by the Very Rev. Sam Candler**

When I was not at church a couple of Sundays ago, unexpectedly, some of you guessed the reason. It was certainly no secret, but neither did it need to be proclaimed everywhere.

I received my second booster against the covid-19 virus (I refuse to capitalize covid!) on a Friday. On Saturday, the day afterwards, I prepared to drive down to Coweta County for the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party for my father; and I took a precautionary covid antigen test. Like many of you, I am fully vaccinated and I have been testing regularly, especially before I visit gatherings where people might be vulnerable.

Lo and behold. I tested positive. I had no symptoms. (Other members of my family had tested positive earlier that week. Though it is difficult to do full contact tracing these days, I know I did not become infected at church, nor was I in church while contagious!) I continued to show little, to mild, symptoms. But I also continued to test positive! So, of course, I isolated. It was not until a full 10 days after my first positive test that a wonderful "negative" appeared on my antigen test. I said an Alleluia on that day! It meant I could re-engage with people; it meant I could come back to church!

My story is a common one, these days. I am sorry for the severe reactions of people, but I am thankful that so many cases these days are, relatively, mild. I hope the cases continue to be milder and milder.

We all make our way in this pandemic. It has been more than a long journey. It's been a long haul. We have been hauling. We have been hauling our anxieties and cautions. We have been hauling our frustrations and angers and illnesses. We have been hauling our cares and responsibilities. We have been hauling our love. So many of us care not just for our own personal health, but for the health of people we are responsible for: families, schools, churches, companies, neighborhoods.

During this haul, we have also encountered demons, demons of all sorts. We have had to face ignorances, social injustices, historic shames, personal failures. It's been a long haul.

Thank you for sharing the haul with me. Thank you for sharing the haul with the Cathedral of St. Philip. This past April and May, I have gathered (when I was not contagious!) with all sorts of groups – from youth groups to guilds to Bible studies to everyone – as we have ended our program year with receptions and celebrations. We have truly been a graceful community during this journey, hauling together, helping together, laughing and crying together. Thank you for sharing your lives in this holy community.

Summer is soon here. Our lives take a break (though the Cathedral Farmers Market blossoms and thrives!). It is okay to take a break. Some of us will simply stay in town and catch our breath. Some of us will cautiously venture out of town. Wherever we are, I hope we catch our breath. The haul has been tiresome. We are in fatigue, and we need some fresh air.

We catch our breath. And it is clean and fulsome and healthy and pandemic-free breath! In two weeks, the Feast of Pentecost will be fresh breath – a Feast of Holy Spirit, of rushing wind and healthy breath. Come, Holy Spirit!



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Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

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