

## BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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*SHELTER*. “You who live in the *SHELTER* of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.’” (Psalm 91:1). The housing and rental markets in our country are becoming so volatile these days. The dream of being a homeowner alludes many because affordable housing is difficult to find. The news of people living on the street boggles our minds as they try to find *SHELTER* for security with basic necessities.

The “*Midrash*” is the commentary by ancient rabbinic scholars as interpretations of Hebrew scriptures. One interpretation of Psalm 91 is that Moses wrote it on the day he completed the building of the Tabernacle in the desert and then entered the Tabernacle and experienced the Tabernacle as “*the SHELTER of the Most High*.” Another commentary describes Moses experiencing a *SHELTER* while ascending into the clouds that surrounded Mount Sinai when Moses had conversation with God. Both describe Moses’ experience as “*refuge*” and “*fortress*” from “*angels of destruction*.”

*SHELTER* has many forms: simple open aired with posts and some type of roof in warm regions for protection from the sun, tents, underground quarters, tree houses, huts, houses, mansions, apartments, and condominiums. *SHELTER* becomes a place to stay and live, a safe haven from climate conditions, and a refuge from conflicts with other people. *SHELTER* can be a place of welcome, retreat, entertainment, rest, and a holy place. It can also be a place of confinement, punishment, hiding place, and escape.

Psalm 91 reminds us of God protecting and rescuing us from evil and danger. *SHELTER* is sanctuary and safe haven, shield and refuge in a time when all around us is disjointed, in turmoil, and dangerous. Michale Joncas in 1979 wrote a beautiful hymn with reference to Psalm 91 that offers us comfort and covenant with God on life’s journey. During the pandemic the Jesuits offered a liturgical prayer, “*A Prayer for our Uncertain Times*,” which includes the petitions: “*May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health and making their rent...May we who settle in for a quarantine at home remember those who have no home.*” *SHELTER*: may it be filled with God’s forgiveness, reconciliation, love, justice, peace, and goodwill. **BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**