

***“Till death us do part”. It provides such relief for our married couples that they can remain together in their old age, no matter what.***

As a highly valued supporter of the College you will know how much we pride ourselves on the level of care we provide. You understand that so many Anglican Clergy and Church workers face an uncertain retirement due to a lack of finances. This can leave the vulnerable, frail and sick elderly in a terrible situation. You will understand that needing help and nursing care but not being able to afford it is a very frightening thing. To know that there is somewhere to go that can support all of your needs when you require it most is beyond reassuring. Can you imagine the relief, if like two of our residents, Fr David and Hope Haggan, you are told you don't have to be parted due to ill health, that you can continue to spend your old age with the one you love? After a lifetime together the Haggans certainly didn't want to consider being separated. Living at the College means they can stay together.

The Haggans met in 1948 at a Young People's Conference at Capernwray Hall, an international inter-denominational Christian Bible School in Lancashire. David was still at University and lived in Belfast, Hope was working in Cardiff. They didn't get to see each other very often and between them they had very little money to live on (no more than £5) but they wanted to share their lives together. They married in 1950 and started their life together in Ireland. David received his calling and became a Lay Reader while in Northern Ireland.

In 1970 the couple moved to England. Many years later, aged 61, David retired from full time work in the civil service. He then completed his full training and was Ordained at the age of 64 at The Heath Church, Reigate where he later became the parish priest. Fr Haggan also completed 17 short Chaplaincies during a 12-year period for Inter-Continental Services and Thompson Young at Heart (over 55) Holidays, where he looked after their holiday-makers with his wife, Hope, beside him throughout these times. He devoted his life to the service of God, serving Him by helping others.

Later, in their 80s and living in their home in Reigate, Surrey, life began taking its toll on David and Hope. Fr Haggan was diagnosed with the progressive illness Pulmonary Fibrosis which had serious implications. Day-to-day life became more challenging and Fr Haggan needed increased care and support from his wife. As time went on Hope found it increasingly difficult to manage. She said

***“Things became a muddle: cooking, cleaning, ironing, shopping and gardening, as well as caring for my husband got too much for me to do”.***

David and Hope had reached the stage where they could not manage the upkeep of their home but they struggled on.



With his illness progressing, Fr Haggan would soon need the support of a nursing home, and this would ultimately mean the couple being separated. They faced the prospect of living their future apart, which would lead to feelings of isolation and depression. The Haggans were terrified of this and Fr Haggan also worried he would end up in a home that would lack understanding of his spiritual needs.

Thankfully they were introduced to The College of St. Barnabas. At the College Fr and Mrs Haggan could maintain independently living together in a manageable self-contained apartment within a Christian community, knowing support would be on hand when required from qualified nursing staff. They became residents of the College on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014 and were immediately very pleased they did. They immersed themselves in College life and were relieved of the stresses and muddle of day-to-day chores that they had been facing before.

Then, very unexpectedly, in May 2015 Hope suffered a heart attack. This came as a huge shock because Hope had always considered herself thin and fit. She said it was such a blessing that she was here at the College. The Matron and Warden reacted so quickly. She explained that they got her to the Nursing Wing where paramedics did an ECG while the ambulance was on its way. Hope was rushed to Hospital, where she had emergency surgery to have a stent fitted. At this time, Fr Haggan, who was unable to be left alone in their apartment, was moved into the nursing wing and received care as required in Hope's absence. Hope returned to the College, stayed in the nursing wing for 4 days to recover, then she was well enough to return home to her apartment along with her husband. Without the wonderful nursing wing facilities the alternative situation could have been horrendous. Fr Haggan, an elderly and ill man, could have been forced to move somewhere else and he would have had to try to cope with life without his wife and deal with the anxiety that would certainly have followed.

Mrs Haggan said ***"It is worrying to wonder what would have happened if we had still been in our own home in Reigate!"*** and ***"What a joy that in our extreme old age the College met our needs"***

On the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016 Fr Haggan's illness took a turn for the worse when his breathing became almost impossible. An ambulance was called and he was rushed to the Acute Medical Unit at East Surrey Hospital where he remained for three days. The Haggans then faced a very serious problem. Fr Haggan could not be without oxygen and was going to need 24-hour nursing care. The College unfortunately did not have the facilities to provide the constant oxygen required. In order to prevent the Haggans being separated the College arranged for this situation to be resolved. Oxygen was set up and Fr Haggan came back to the College and moved into the nursing wing where he now has a permanent room. Despite Fr Haggan living in the nursing wing, they are still both at The College of St. Barnabas and able to spend as much time with each other as they desire. Hope visits her husband usually six times each day and still continues living independently as she can in the apartment they had both shared before.

She explained that they feel blessed to be living in ***"a wonderful retirement, in the company of Christian people with different experiences, but with Christianity in common"***.

They agreed that they have everything they need here, that their needs have been catered for since they arrived. They receive three good meals each day, have their washing and cleaning done, and have the opportunity to participate in activities if they wish. Before Fr Haggan moved into the nursing wing they both enjoyed attending regular services in the Chapel and also went to the

fortnightly Extend exercise class, the monthly Theology group, music evenings and poetry sessions. Mrs Haggan still participates in these and enjoys sharing all the news with her husband when she visits him.

Fr Haggan, who now also has a moderate hearing loss, does still get to enjoy listening to the regular Chapel services but from the comfort of his room via a special speaker system. He agreed with his wife's words when she said

***"It is very important for him and although he cannot hear all the words, he can hear the music quite well. Going to the Chapel is not possible now for him because any exertion would be too risky with his illness, so it's wonderful he is still be able to be involved with worship from his room"***

She also said ***"It is very unlikely that he will come home to our flat but it is ok because he is very content here and the most wonderful thing is that we can still be together every day"***.

You will appreciate caring for the elderly comes at a cost. And the harsh reality is that the situation is becoming more challenging for us. As you may know, social security will contribute towards the cost of care to some degree, but we need your help to save many of the frail, vulnerable, poor and infirm Anglicans that live here from a poverty-stricken retirement. Depression and solitude would close in and our married couples would face living separately. By supporting the College you can help give them the peace of mind they deserve. And that is why we need your help now. You can ensure that people like David and Hope can remain together even when their care needs change.

Fr and Mrs Haggan having just celebrated 66 years of marriage. Despite the health issues that have threatened to part them, they remain together in the place they have called home for the last two years. They, like other married couples who live here, are reassured that they can share their retirements together and spend their final days side by side. The College, with your help, will find a way, to enable married couples to stay together as they once vowed to do, till death do them part.

Please give what you can. Even the smallest of donations will help.

Please send your donation to:

**Freepost RLXB-KZXK-SZXJ, The College of St. Barnabas, Blackberry Lane, Lingfield, RH7 6NJ**

*or*

**Donate online by [clicking here](#) to go directly to our [JustGiving](#) page**

Thank you so much for caring enough to help. The Haggans, along with all who live here, will benefit from your kindness.