



Haus Barnabas in Germany's Black Forest

Autumn 2011 - News report

Len & Phyl Holder and Tim & Deb Brooks

The sap is flowing

Growth is one of the essential characteristics of life. Every type of life shows development. Each begins with a seed which under the right conditions develops to produce the final form for which God designed it. In a similar way growth and development is a characteristic of the spiritual life given to every believer. God's purpose is that we should be brought to 'conform to the image of His Son.' (Rom 8:29). Fellow believers, we have a glorious future before us!

"It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2

But this same principle of life, namely growth with a particular purpose and into a planned form, must surely also be true for every activity of God including every ministry and mission of which He is the author. Some ministries are rather like spring flowers. They grow quickly give joy and blessing for a short period and then finish. That was God's purpose for them. Others are more like trees. As they develop their form changes, new branches grow and only God can foresee the final form and sphere of usefulness for which He intended them. Each stage of their growth however is designed by their Creator, and the Holy Spirit, which empowers every work of God, is like the sap which maintains life and promotes growth and produces fruit.

The aim of our ministry is to promote faith and trust in the Lord

Jesus; - "Feed my sheep"; "Feed my lambs"; "Make disciples of all nations." Although this commission of our Lord is the responsibility of His Church throughout the world, He has given us opportunities that few local churches enjoy. What we are today has developed over the years. God has entrusted us with a wonderful house and as we welcome all whom He sends to us we welcome them into our home and into our hearts. We serve them, love them, pray with them and share God's Word with them. Some of our former ideas have never materialised but some few years ago we would never have imagined being what we are today. What is important is that the sap is flowing, the Holy Spirit is at work.

We value your interest and want to share with you some of the things that have been happening in HB in 2011. We also covet your support and prayers that we may see greater blessing and further miracles in the future.

God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

2 Cor 9:8



Coffee time after a Sunday service

Our aims and objectives

1. To provide and run a Christian centre in the Black Forest of Germany as a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The aim is two-fold, (a) to promote a personal faith in Jesus Christ and (b) to provide an environment where Christian believers can be encouraged and spiritually refreshed and motivated to practice their faith in their daily lives.

2. Depending on God's blessing, the regular means to be used to achieve these aims are (a) daily biblical devotions and fellowship (b) pastoral care and counselling (c) a regular Sunday worship service and a weekly Bible Study evening (d) occasional evangelistic meetings and themed conferences and teaching sessions. (e) providing accommodation for those wanting and needing the ministry provided.

3. All guests staying in Haus Barnabas will normally be expected to pay sufficient to cover at least the basic expenses of their stay, while 'recommended rates' will be at a more realistic level to contribute towards the general running of the house and ministry.

4. Other activities, consistent with biblical principles, and with the ultimate aim of representing and proclaiming the biblical Gospel of Jesus Christ both locally and world-wide may also be engaged in.

Pastoral care and counselling

This sounds very highfalutin! Our approach is very relaxed. We don't have qualifications as counsellors but a lifetime of experience with people and a genuine interest in our guests. Many feel that they can talk to us about personal problems and we are then able to pray with them and often continue to do this after they return home. One guest wrote to us in an email: "... how blessed I felt the first Sunday we were at Haus Barnabas and you, Phyl, talked to me and asked me some of my story and Len, you asked A. about himself. Being, as A is a minister and for me as his wife it struck me that very few people ask us anything about ourselves!" Another guest wrote "Thank you so much for listening to us; we were able to talk, joke and share and be listened to with unfailing patience and kindness. It was a great help to us in terms of unwinding from the stress of our lives."

Sunday Worship

In order to support an initiative from an evangelical Church in another part of the Black Forest which has been holding services in our local town two Sundays a month, we have this year delayed the start of our own service to 10.30 am. This has enabled Tim and Deb and family to attend the Schönau service at 9.00 am and be back to take part in the Haus Barnabas one too.

Our times of public worship and Bible study are published in two local papers together with a fresh Bible text each week. Although in this strongly RC area we have only occasionally this year had folk from the locality attending, we know our Bible text is read and that we are watched with interest. Guests and holiday visitors form the nucleus of our fellowship each Sunday and an awareness of the Lord's presence has made these times together very precious.

Daily morning devotions

One of our guests wrote: "Thanks for the example of having a family devotion and prayer in the mornings and together devoting each day to our Lord. I pray we would start something similar at home."

Some of guests like to continue using our Daily Manna Scripture readings together with Spurgeon's meditation and copies can be ordered from David Barnes: 01268 558538 or Email: d.cbarnes@yahoo.co.uk

Guest speakers in Haus Barnabas Easter weekend

This was our first Bible retreat of 2011 and we felt to be honoured greatly with the Lord's presence. It ran for 4 days and all who came were blessed by the ministry of Tom Lori. He spoke on the life of Moses under the title 'The making of a man of God'. Steady attendance over the weekend was 25 with others coming in for some sessions. 31 of us sat down to a passover meal on Saturday evening. Guests and participants came from UK, Switzerland and Germany and it was good to be able to welcome new faces as well as more long-standing friends. On the Wednesday after Easter we held an open evening with a buffet supper followed by a talk by Tom entitled: *'How I as a Jew came to find the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as my Saviour'*. We saw this as an evangelistic opportunity and advertised it as widely as possible. A number of our Easter guests stayed on to support us and we were also pleased to welcome 8 further people from the locality. Tom spoke in German and Deb translated into English in one corner for our non-German speaking guests. We feel that Tom's testimony and witness spoke to our hearts and we pray and trust to the hearts of some with us who don't yet know the Lord Jesus personally.

Reformation seminar

A reformation week has become an annual event in HB with lectures on the main 16th century reformers and visits to places of historical interest in Switzerland and southern Germany. This May, for the first time, we were able to include lectures on the doctrines of the reformation. Dr Bernhard Kaiser of the Institute of Reformation Theology (www.irt-gmbh.de) gave us four lectures on aspects of Biblical doctrine that

the reformers had emphasised; *Christ alone, Scripture alone; Grace alone and Faith alone*, and showed how the Church had strayed from these truths. Dr Kaiser also led times of questions and discussion and all felt this addition to our reformation week most helpful. It was good to have Joseph Paul with us, sponsored by India Link Ministries.



Martin Luther's doctrine fed our souls

Retreat week with Marilyn Baker and Tracy Williamson

This was a further opportunity to combine a retreat week led by Tracy & Marilyn with an evangelistic evening. Marilyn has been with us a number of times now and her ministry in word and song is appreciated locally. Several that we invited from the village this year expressed disappointment however that Marilyn's concert was the same evening as a special mass to celebrate 100 years of the Lourdes Grotto in Utzenfeld which they felt an obligation to attend!

Week of ministry with Steve Wyncoll

We were pleased to welcome Steve & Christine Wyncoll for the first time in June. Steve is minister of Waldringfield Baptist Church, Suffolk, and brought us each evening a series of devotional studies based on the life of Elisha.

Group holidays with a difference Pitsea Friday Club Family Week



Once again in 2011 we hosted a family holiday for the Pitsea Friday Club children with parents and supporting friends.



There were organised outings each day which most families joined in on but the emphasis was on the spiritual input.

David & Christine Barnes ran a programme for the children each evening and we provided morning devotions and a Sunday family service. The week concluded with a BBQ in the garden and an evening programme to involve children and adults, concluding with personal testimonies of what it means to have Jesus as Lord of our life.

Bird watching and nature weeks

Although with fewer guests than hoped for, the two weeks, in early June designated more particularly for those interested in birds and nature, were a great success. Len led outings to the Kaiserstuhl where amongst other birds we saw bee-eaters, a hoopoe and redpolls, also the Wutachschlucht where we saw a number of forest and river birds with several pairs of nesting grey wagtails. And the picture shows us at the Nonnenmattweiher. Further sightings of particular

interest were a pair of ring ousels seen on the far side of the Belchen mountain, pied flycatchers, yellow hammers. And black redstarts. The whole earth is full of God's glory and as we sometimes sing: *'something*



lives in every hue that Christless eyes have never seen.' It's a privilege for us to serve the Lord in such beautiful surroundings but this somehow emphasises the spiritual darkness around us. Many appreciate and enjoy nature but sadly have no personal relationship with the Creator.

Sportsreach ladies football team

A second visit from the 'Sportsreach' ladies was a great success and enjoyed by us all. The house was extremely lively and thankfully the girls had it to themselves with a total of 19 when three German young ladies joined them for the weekend. They put up a strong football team playing two matches in our local Schönau



The girls attracted a lot of attention in a positive way and demonstrated clearly that living for Jesus is no way a dull affair! Their participation in our Sunday service and the concert they put on was a tremendous blessing although we would love to have had a greater response to the adverts we put out for this.

We hope very much that Sue Marsden will be able to bring out a further team next year and that we will be able to arrange at least one additional match for them. The manager of the Todtnau ladies football team, who watched the match in Schönau and listened intently to Sue's testimony and witness, was enthusiastic that they play against his team next time they came! Sportsreach are doing a great work also in the UK and you can find out more about them on their website www.sportsreach.org.uk



sports stadium. The first against a visiting men's team from Bern, Switzerland they won 3-2 and they then drew 2-2 against our local Schönau ladies' team. After each match Sue, their leader and organiser was able to share the Gospel of the love of Jesus to the opposing team with a translation by Deb, and to distribute literature.

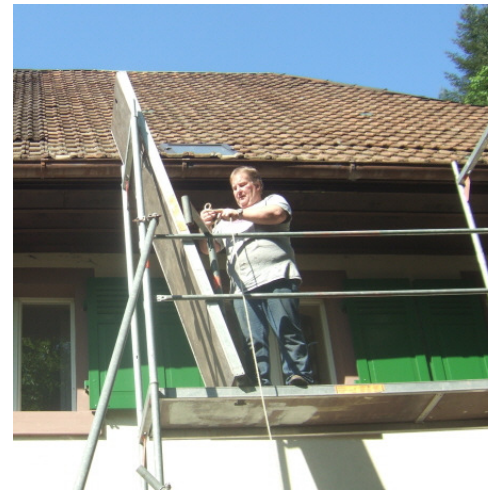


As well as our older guests, youngsters of all ages enjoy the "Schwarzwald". We have a 2.9 Km downhill mountain coaster, and in winter there is excellent skiing and snow boarding.

Haus Barnabas – the building

Roof repairs

Some of our friends expressed their concern about the news of wood rot in one of our roof rafters, which we shared with you some months ago. Thankfully this was not so serious as we first thought and we have been extremely grateful to the Lord and his ministering servants that this has now been dealt with. A small team of men came out to us in May at their own expense, repaired the rafter, put in a new roof window, painted some of our window shutters and areas of the outside wall and renewed tiling in one of our bathrooms. Praise the Lord with us for this very practical help.



Major roof development?

We have been encouraged to proceed in a professional way with the development of our large roof space. Accordingly we have involved a local architect who is a Christian man in fellowship with a free church in the area. He understands our position and that we can only proceed as fast as the Lord provides the money.

Within our large roof area and above our first floor with its existing guest rooms, are a further three floors narrowing of course due to the slant of the roof. It seems wise to plan

for a development which involves the whole space and to get such drawn up and passed by the local authority and then to proceed in stages step by step as the means becomes available. Apparently after plans are passed we have up to three years to make a start and then must not have gaps of more than two years without further progress being made. In other words the whole development can be seen as fairly long term.

For ourselves, Len & Phyl, our years of active service are obviously fewer than they were but it would be wonderful, if it were God's will, for us to see at least the beginning of a development which would leave Haus Barnabas in a better position to go on for God's glory after He calls us home.

Our present thoughts are to draw up plans which would increase our guest capacity to about thirty. The additional bedrooms being on the second floor immediately above our existing guest rooms. Much of the next floor would be devoted to a largish room for meetings, fellowship or study. But one end of this would be separated off as the down-stairs area of a staff flat which would be designed to also include rooms on the final top floor. In order to give easy access to these upper floors, also for handicapped guests, we envisage a lift up as far as the fellowship room on the third floor. The development would include dormer windows and whole would involve a considerable expenditure.

Major Ian Thomas of Capernwray Hall is reputed to have made the observation that in the Lord's work never ask the question as to whether a thing is possible but rather ask is it right. This is our prayerful concern and we can only proceed as the Lord opens the way.

Our architect has discovered that he could apply for a grant towards a proportion of the cost, namely in regard to facilities for handicapped guests, (the lift), educational facilities, (the lecture room) and the staff flat.

Praise God for holiday guests without whose presence there would be no Haus Barnabas.

During 2011 we have welcomed guests and helpers from many parts of England, Wales, N. Ireland, Eire, Germany, Switzerland, France Israel and Australia, as well as nationals living in Britain from Ghana, China, Pakistan and Malaysia. Many have shared with us the testimony of their conversion to faith in Jesus and and their present walk and service for Him and we have found mutual blessing together.

The majority have been able to pay our full recommended rates for their stay with us and this has helped us to welcome others on low incomes or full-time Christian work at subsidised rates. Some have wanted to devote part of their time with us helping practically in the house and almost every week there has been a wonderful sense of being a family together in the Lord.



Hayley, on honeymoon with her new husband Ben, celebrating her 22nd birthday!

Virtually all our guests have expressed their pleasure in holidaying with us and in addition to positive comments about the fellowship in the house, new-comers to the Black Forest have been amazed at the beauty of the area, the efficiency and frequency of the public transport and the apparent generosity of the local authority in providing 'free' use of buses, trains and trams, free entry into local open-air swimming pools and concessions on cable cars and chairlifts. "Why aren't you full every week ?" they ask.

Haus Barnabas Prayer Bookmark

Our work in the Black Forest of Germany is essentially a spiritual ministry and we are totally dependent on the Lord to prosper and use us for His glory and Kingdom.

We covet above all the blessings of Paul's prayer - Please pray this for us:-

...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.

Col 1:9-11

For other practical suggestions for prayer see other side.

Haus Barnabas and the local community

We pray constantly to be a spiritual light and witness in our locality and we know that we are watched with interest and that our Scripture text each week in the paper is noted and read. Being a rural community with a long Roman Catholic tradition, the forms and ceremonies of the Church are an integral part of local culture. The concept of a 'free' church is difficult for many to grasp and consequently we are viewed with a fair amount of suspicion. Although we have a good relationship with many folk around us and over the years quite a number have come occasionally or more often to our services we are really still at the stage where we feel a sense of achievement to get people over the threshold and into the house.

The café as a point of contact

A natural and relaxed way for folk to come into Haus Barnabas is through our café and we have several villagers who come to us happily either as individuals or in club groups for eats and drinks. In conversation they often ask questions about our faith and this has given the opportunity to give free Gospels and New Testaments.



Phyl with some of the village ladies who often come into the café for home-made scones, apple-cake and cream!

With suitable additional staff or helpers we would love to extend the opening hours of the café, the scope of the food we offer and at the same time better equip our book stall.

The children give a point of contact

It's not easy being the odd ones out in any community and this is exactly how Tom and Esther have been made to feel at times in Utzenfeld. Their Britishness and the degree of suspicion that rests around Haus Barnabas have been barriers to overcome but thankfully they now have friends whose parents allow them to come and play in HB and last year we were able to have a week's holiday Bible Club.



Deb has also been involved in parent committees at the kindergarten and school and was invited to give a few hour's introduction to English in the kindergarten!

Special evenings in HB

Our annual carol service is now established in the village as too are evenings with Marilyn Baker sharing the Gospel in word and song. As mentioned elsewhere in this news report we are also grateful to Tom Lori and the Sportsreach ladies for leading public evening outreach events this year.



Haus Barnabas Prayer Bookmark

Practical items for
prayer:

**That those who God
wants to bless through
Haus Barnabas might be
made aware of us and
book to come!**

**That we might be
sensitive to the needs of
all who spend time with
us in HB and be a
blessing to them.**

**That revival blessing
might come upon the
inhabitants of Utzenfeld
and the surrounding
villages.**

**That we might be able
to meet the financial
commitments of house
and work each month.**

**Please check our blogspot
for up-to-date news and
matters for prayer.**

[www.haus-
barnabas.blogspot.com](http://www.haus-barnabas.blogspot.com)

Len & Phyl Holder and Tim & Deb
Brooks with Tom & Esther
Haus Barnabas
Black Forest, Germany
Tel 0049 7673 7760
Email: len.holder@haus-
barnabas.com

Praise God for voluntary helpers without whom the work of the year would have been impossible.

Without specifically advertising for helping hands in the house, God has sent us a stream of helpers throughout the year, without whom the work would have been humanly impossible. The youngest was 18 and the oldest 67. They have lived with us as family and worked in the house and garden with enthusiasm (there seems to be an unending stream of dirty dishes and beds to change); they provided motivation and willing, skilful hands to redecorate the lounge and some have almost begged to be allowed to come back another year!



**Tom and Esther
relate well to our
guests and helpers
and accept happily
that they come and
go and goodbyes
have soon to be
said.**

One comment in our guest book reads: *“Right, I'm off to sleep for a week! ... Haus Barnabas has left its mark on me, I'll be back.”*

Most of our helpers have entered enthusiastically into the spiritual aspects of the house, regularly been down for morning devotions and valued both the Sunday ministry and that of our guest speakers. Personal conversations, some times at considerable depth, have been a privilege and one of our guests commented that they realised that the personal ministry to our helpers was an important aspect of Haus Barnabas.

**Please pray that the Lord will
continue to supply the help we
need to run the house and in His
time send us those of His choice
to work longer term with us.**

Personal from Len & Phyl



Our dear brothers & sisters,

We couldn't send out a news report without a personal note and here it is! It's a tremendous privilege for us to have personal contact through Haus Barnabas with so many of you who love the Lord Jesus and your interest and support is a great blessing to us. Our life here in Utzenfeld is very much one of faith and we sometimes think how nice it would be to have a regular monthly income coming into the house sufficient to cover our commitments without anxiety and similarly to know in advance God's plan for our future. However that's not the way He has led us and actually we have to acknowledge that to wait on the Lord is a very precious position to be in and we want to honour Him in declaring He is fully trustworthy.

The very fact that against all apparent odds we are still here in Utzenfeld after 20 years and have been in Gasthaus Engel now nearly 10 years is evidence of God's faithfulness and that His promises can be trusted. However both of us have passed our 65th birthdays in 2011 and we are convinced that the time is right for us lay down much of the practical running of Haus Barnabas so as to be able to concentrate on spiritual ministry and personal encouragement and care. Please pray with us that we might see how to do this. Another person or couple with housekeeping skills and a love of hospitality, to work with Tim & Deb, would be an ideal solution, but this is not a 'job' it's a 'calling with commitment'. When Amy Carmichael was praying for someone to run her home for temple children in India, she said to God 'How can I invite anyone into this work Lord. All we can offer with any certainty is a burial spot.' (they obviously had a cemetery in the grounds for the infants who had died!) In Haus Barnabas we don't even have that! But thinking positively we do have a beautiful area to live, the privilege of serving God's children from all over the world, a challenging mission field and a faithful Master! Who, in the words of Jim Elliot, is prepared 'to lose what they cannot keep to gain what they cannot lose' and come and help us?

We are planning **'reunion and information' meetings** as follows, and would love to see as many of you as possible:

North London - Sat 21st January – Begin 3.00 pm

Stanmore Chapel, 96 Marsh Lane, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4HP
*Holiday memories; news update; devotional from Rev Colin Leyshon;
Haus Barnabas 'high tea' with Black Forest gateau*

North-West Wales - Sat 17th March - Begin 3.30 pm

Capel Fron, Penryndeuthreath LL48 6DN – details 01766 780784

Our prayerful best wishes for 2012 **Len & Phyl**

Personal from Tim & Deb with Tom & Esther

As many of you will already know, the Brooks family were in England twice this year, the first time at Easter for Deb's brother Martyn's wedding, when the children enjoyed being bridesmaid and pageboy for new auntie Lisa. The second time was in June, and Tom broke his arm playing at a playground in Cambridge. This resulted in two stints in hospital, first in Cambridge, and then in Lörrach after we got home as it had set in the wrong position. We are thankful to the Lord that his arm is now back to normal. Otherwise our England trip was much as normal(!), involving as it did time with family and friends and speaking at our home churches, as well as a friend's church in London. We hope to be in England next year for the first 2 weeks of April. Please get in touch if you would like us to speak at your church.

The summer this year has been busy in patches with quieter times in between. Financially a fuller house would have been an advantage, but this situation, together with our steady stream of helpers, did enable us to get away for a week's break in a caravan near Lake Constance at the beginning of August. It is good to have the opportunity to be away as a family on our own once a year, and I think we all came back feeling refreshed.

The most obvious major event recently has been Esther starting school for the first time. She has been alternately nervous and excited in the build up to this. However, she arrived back yesterday (Monday 18th) after her first proper day very happy, and looking forward to continuing to attend school. She even sat down at the table and did her homework straight away all on her own!!

Tom is back for his final year of primary school, which has its intimidating side as this year decisions will be made about secondary schools. His report at the end of last year was not very encouraging, and he has also been having problems at home. His doctor says he has ADHD, which stands for Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. She (the doctor) has lent us a book about this, and what adjustments can be made to our home life to help us all cope. It will probably also be necessary to talk to his teacher at some point. If we can't sort things out medication may also be an option.

With Esther and Tom both getting homework now, Deb's juggling act between the Haus, the children and the language school could be more difficult this year. Please pray that she and Tim might have the strength and wisdom to cope with all this, especially as Len and Phyl get older and are able to do less. Deb also expects to be teaching an English class for the children at the Schönau kindergarten this year. This is a great opportunity, but please pray that she will do a good job - she has had no training in teaching children, and feels a bit nervous, especially as they will be very young children!

Please continue to pray that the family's language skills will improve. On the subject of German, I remember boldly announcing in my last newsletter that I (Deb) was going to try and speak just German with the children. This hasn't really worked, but I certainly have spoken more German with them since I started trying to do it.

Thanks to all of you who pray for us faithfully, and may you also know the Lord's blessing as you have need. We would like to take this opportunity to wish a happy Christmas to such of you as we may not be in touch with again before the end of the year. With love from.

Deb, Tim, Tom and Esther

September 2011

Maybe a break in Haus Barnabas is exactly what God has in mind for you in 2012.

Jesus said to His disciples:

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Mark 6:3

Here are a few points to consider when thinking and praying about a visit:

- * Coming and paying our recommended rates for accommodation **helps to support our local witness** for the Lord here in the Black Forest.
- * You are coming into a Christian family environment. There are **daily times of devotion and fellowship** but there is no pressure to participate if you just need time by yourself.
- * If your financial circumstances are difficult, there is **the option of paying a very basic rate** and supporting the work in other ways.
- * You **don't need a lot of spending money** for an active time in the Black Forest. Once here, you receive a 'guest card' which gives you free use of buses and trains over an area of about 180 sq miles. You also get tokens for free rides on cable cars, and reduced entry charges into museums, swimming and thermal baths, and in winter 10% off ski-lifts.
- * **We offer to meet you at an airport** or train station at a reasonable rate.
- * We have an **extensive library** to suit most tastes and there is **free WIFI** in the house and a computer available for guests to use.
- * In your room you will find an **information folder** full of detailed suggestions (with bus times), of places to visit and walks to do.

For further details including prices and our programme of theme weeks and specific ministry in 2012 please either request a brochure from Rosemary Edwards on 01227 363857; David Barnes on 01268 558538 or see our website: www.haus-barnabas.com

Haus Barnabas and our ministry can also be supported by gifts channelled through the British registered charity **Bible in Action Trust**
Treasurer: David McCann, 4 Westbrook Close, Parkgate, Southampton SO31 7AU, Email: clan.mccann@googlemail.com

Len & Phyl Holder and Tim & Deb Brooks
Haus Barnabas im Engel, Wiesentalstr 47, 79694 Utzenfeld, Germany
Tel: 0049 7673 7760; Email Len.holder@haus-barnabas.com
Website: www.haus-barnabas.com