

Haus Barnabas News Christmas 2023



Esther and Jonathan's wedding this May

Dear all,

There is no visible snow as I look out of my window this year, though it has been and gone at least once at our level, but when we drive over the Feldberg on Sundays, there is still plenty to be seen, and one particular Sunday a couple of weeks ago when it was fresh and still mainly untouched with the morning sun on it, I was reminded of Isaiah 1:18 and felt sheer amazement at the thought that our sins could ever be as white as the glory I was seeing. But that is the reason why Jesus came at Christmas so long ago, and that is what is promised to us in the gospel. Please pray for us as we seek to share the glory of this message, particularly in our Christmas outreach meeting on the 23rd, but in all our meetings this Christmas (also Christmas Eve and Christmas Day).

2023 has been an eventful year at Haus Barnabas! Our daughter has got married, Jonathan has joined us at Haus Barnabas, the four of us have discovered and become members of the Evangelisch Reformierte Gemeinde Villingen-Schwenningen (if you want to translate that as Evangelical Reformed Church, you could!), which has been a great encouragement to us, to name a few of the highlights!

Also during the course of the year, we enjoyed welcoming the Presbyterian church from Basel, where Geoff Holder is an elder, for an Easter weekend getaway. This was a good opportunity for us to be able to hear some of the ministry as well as having a full house. It is good to have events in the house that we can also invite local people to, and it was very interesting to discover that Daniela, who attends our Bible study, already knew Kurt, the pastor of the Presbyterian church!



Kurt, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Basel, and the congregation

Part of the reason it is good to have meetings in the house is that Tom, our son, still isn't managing to attend anything outside the house. We were greatly encouraged that he made it to his sister's wedding in Sheffield, but hopes that this would be the beginning of him doing more when at home have gradually died. He does still feel that he is getting better, which is encouraging as far as it goes, but any progress is so slow as to be almost invisible.

On the down side, Peter and Elisabeth have stopped coming to Bible study, on the surface because of a misunderstanding about what we believe happens to babies when they die, but probably really because they are unhappy about our serious view of sin. It is always sad when people turn away from the gospel like this, but please continue to pray for them. Susanne continues to stand on the brink of being converted but hasn't actually got there. Please continue to pray for her too. We are encouraged that Erwin now joins us for Bible study when he can as well as

Daniela. They are all away on holiday at the moment, but we expect them back in January. In the meantime, Bible study continues in English with Simon (who is English in spite of living in Utzenfeld) and a large English family who are staying with us for the month of December. Please pray that the Lord will use these meetings to be a blessing to all who come.

With our new church membership, and after discussions with Allen and Annette (the only people who normally attend when we don't have guests), we have decided to stop advertising a Sunday service every week. We will still offer a Sunday meeting for Christian guests, probably mainly those from the UK who don't really have other options for English-speaking worship, but when we don't have any reason to suppose anyone will come, we won't put an advert in the paper that will tie us to Haus Barnabas every Sunday afternoon and restrict possibilities for fellowship and attending the afternoon service that our church in Villingen will be starting in the New Year. We are very grateful to the church for their support in prayer as well as the ladies from the church who are diligently making Christmas biscuits for our outreach event, although I'm sure they must have enough to do for their own families at this time of year.



Deb and Esther making biscuits with the ladies from church

As we won't be running our own service every week, we would ask that you would join us in praying for guidance regarding any other meetings or means of outreach that we should consider running now that we will have (theoretically!) more time. We don't want to start another meeting for the sake of it, and then be tied to an advertised time even if no one shows up, but on the other hand, we do feel we should consider whether the Lord is leading us to do something different.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers and support in 2023 and wish each of you God's blessing this Christmas and as you continue to serve Him in 2024.

With love from us all,

Deb, Tim and family

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