

## The Holy Spirit Hospital in Blaubeuren

For many centuries, the "Spital zum Heiligen Geist" was one of the most important institutions in Blaubeuren. It was founded in 1420 by Hans Russ. He was vicar general of the bishop of Constance, but came from Blaubeuren and was related to the Blaubeuren dean Konrad Klett, whom he commissioned to found the hospital. However, it was under the supervision of the Bishop of Constance.

In the Middle Ages, a hospital was not a hospital, as one might think, but a house for the poor. They led a communal life here, had to submit to the hospital administrator and no longer had any private property. In addition to the poor, the old, the sick, the disabled, widows and orphans who had no relatives to look after them were also cared for. Among them there were certainly richer persons whose property was then also transferred to the hospital and who were therefore very gladly taken in. In 1609, for example, 60 people were cared for in the hospital.

The hospital also had a chapel. Its historical wall paintings have been preserved to this day. In 1600, another storey was built above the chapel with two corner bay windows and a connecting building. On the upper floor, especially in the "Herrenstube", the hospital administration was housed and downstairs in the chapel now the hospital and town archives. A second chapel had existed in the hospital for a long time anyway, which in the meantime had expanded over several buildings.

People were cared for in the hospital until 2008. In the 1930s, it was combined with the Blaubeurer Bürgerhaus, so that it became a home for the elderly. Since 1964, the west wing of the building has also housed the prehistoric museum of the town of Blaubeuren. At first, only one room was available to the museum. Several alterations to the building made it possible to constantly enlarge and redesign the museum exhibition. During the last renovation from 2009-2012, the Museum of Prehistory was also extended to the north wing of the hospital building. Here, finds from excavation work are exhibited, leading through the millennia-old history of human settlement on the Alb. Unique cave finds are also on display here, which are among the earliest known evidence of art history.