

Editors' Introduction

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This fall, scholars working in the field of Amish studies lost a friend and research colleague with the death of David Luthy on October 21. As many readers of this journal know, Luthy was a longtime editor and writer for Pathway Publishers, writing dozens of articles on Amish history under the heading “Yesterdays and Years” in the magazine *Family Life*. He was also the founder of Pathways’ Heritage Historical Library, in Aylmer, Ontario. An appreciation for his life and work appears in this issue of the journal.

The first issue of volume 6 of the *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities* opens with two articles focused on aspects of the history of two different Anabaptist traditions. In “Hutterite History as a Refugee Story,” Emmy Barth Maendel, who serves as senior archivist at the Bruderhof Historical Archive, Walden, New York, traces the migratory history—and deftly summarizes the reasons for such movements—over the course of nearly five centuries. Her article focuses mostly on the Hutterites but she also includes the Bruderhof Communities, which began in Germany in 1920, and now have communities in several countries. These two groups—the Hutterites and the Bruderhof—have, at various points, been in formal relationship with each another. Today, they are distinct but share a tradition of Anabaptist communitarianism.

Evan Knappenberger, a graduate student at Drew University, provides readers with the text of a sermon and set of formularies for administering church ordinances and other rituals, written in the first half of the nineteenth century by Bishop Daniel Good (1781–1850) of Rockingham County, Virginia. Knappenberger introduces and annotates the document, which had been partially translated by John S. Umble (1881–1966) but rarely consulted by scholars. Lois Bowman Kreider and Knappenberger completed and corrected the translation. Since the Good manuscript documents church life before the developments that divided change-minded and Old Order Mennonites, it offers a window onto the world that Virginia Old Order Mennonites sought to maintain.



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A third article focuses on contemporary Plain community life and the tragic topic of crashes involving horse-drawn buggies and motor vehicles, over one quarter of which result in serious injury or death. Mark Dewalt of Winthrop University and Rachel E. Stein of West Virginia University culled all buggy accidents reported in *The Diary*, a monthly Amish periodical, between 2015 and 2022. Recent safety recommendations have focused on making buggies more visible, but the data in this study suggest the full range of accident causes and propose a number of different strategies for allowing horses, buggies, and motor vehicles to travel together more safely.

Two research notes appear in this issue. One reports recent (2024) Hutterite populations by geographic location and *Leut* affiliation and also compares the growth in the number of colonies from 2009 to 2024, with observations on the apparent connection between dropping Hutterite birth rates and the rate of new colony formation. The other reports preliminary findings from an ongoing and multiyear study, based at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, of Amish voting in U.S. elections. The data and context shared in this issue come from the Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, settlement. Despite inflated rhetoric in the media and from certain political activists, Amish voting in the November 2024 election was, in fact, somewhat lower than in 2020.

Our series featuring research collections with holdings related to Plain groups continues with a profile of the Pequea Bruderschaft Library in Gordonville, Pennsylvania. We conclude this issue with four books reviews. Two of the books deal with Hutterite subjects, another details Amish courtship and wedding practices in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, settlement, and the fourth is a memoir by a conservative Mennonite writer who now lives in Maryland but whose memoir focuses on her young adult years in Wisconsin and an important, unlikely relationship she built with an older Ojibway woman.

Finally, we are pleased to offer an index of the first five volumes of the *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities*. Reviewing the topics and titles, it is gratifying to see the range and depth of scholarship fostered by those working in this field. We plan to publish an updated index annually. The present issue and the one in process for spring 2026 illustrate the continued vitality of *JPAC*, as do the new members we are welcoming to the journal's expanded editorial board.

The *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities* is jointly sponsored by the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center in Berlin, Ohio, and The Ohio State University Libraries.

JPAC is dedicated to publishing both empirical and theoretical work related to Plain Anabaptist communities, including, among others, the Amish, conservative Mennonites, Amish-Mennonites, Apostolic Christians, Brethren, Bruderhof, and Hutterites. *JPAC* articles may include emerging issues associated with Plain Anabaptist communities, diverse theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches to the study of Plain Anabaptist groups, and significant research findings about Plain Anabaptist populations. To discuss ideas for manuscripts for possible publication in the journal, contact Joe Donnermeyer (donnermeyer.1@gmail.com) or Steve Nolt (nolts@etown.edu). For more information about the journal, including author guidelines, visit <https://plainanabaptistjournal.org>.