

## Editors' Introduction

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Scholarship on Plain Anabaptist communities builds on many types of sources, including materials gathered and preserved in special collection libraries and archives. Some of these centers have been developed and maintained by Plain community members, while others are repositories affiliated with academic institutions. In this issue of *JPAC*, we begin a new series introducing these research centers and their holdings and management. We begin with the Ohio Amish Library and the Geauga Amish Historical Library and will feature additional centers in the coming issues.

This issue of *JPAC* also includes our standard sections: research articles, fieldwork and reflections, and book reviews. Coming from the fields of legal studies, demography, socio-linguistic, and ethnographic religious studies, this issue's research pieces demonstrate the multi-disciplinary nature of scholarship on Plain communities. Attorney Chris Wittstruck analyzes the 2021 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Mast v. Fillmore County, Minnesota*, explaining why it is, in Wittstruck's view, a helpful supplement to the 1972 ruling in *Wisconsin v. Yoder*. If *Yoder's* ruling relied, in part, on putting the Amish community on something of a pedestal, Wittstruck sees *Mast* as providing a clear defense of religious liberty that does not rely on a preconceived notion of Amish virtue. Joe Donnermeyer, professor emeritus at Ohio State University's School of Environment and Natural Resources, uses data in the 2019 *Michigan Amish Directory* to provide a comprehensive picture of the Wolverine State's Amish population, which is now the sixth largest in America. Rose Fisher, a native Pennsylvania Dutch speaker and a doctoral student in German linguistics at Penn State University, explores the role of Pennsylvania Dutch in personal identity among Amish, former Amish, and other Pennsylvania German-identifying individuals. Finally, Tony Walsh, Jeff Bach, and Sam Funkhouser, scholars from Ireland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia,



present the second part of their deeply textured analysis of what makes the Old German Baptist Brethren a distinctive Plain group. (Part 1 of their study appeared in the last issue of *JPAC*.)

This issue's Fieldwork and Reflections section includes two pieces that relate to current events. Donnermeyer, Erik Wesner, editor of the website *Amish America*, and Dee Jepsen, professor in Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, present an update on the conflict engendered by a 2022 Ohio law mandating blinking lights on buggies and some of the state's Swartzentruber Amish who are resisting the lights, with some using large rectangular reflectors instead. A far different conflict, the tragic war in Ukraine that escalated dramatically in 2022, has reminded some of our readers of a news story from a decade ago about so-called Ukrainian Amish living southwest of Lviv. In response, Edward Kline, a New Order Amish man from Ohio, offers a firsthand description of these Plain believers who, although not Amish, share certain lifestyle attributes with North American Plain people.

Our issue wraps up with a review of Ervin Beck's book *MennoFolk3: Puns, Riddles, Tales, and Legends*, which continues Beck's examination of Mennonite and Amish folklore.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *JPAC*. We have a lot of great material on deck for 2024!

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*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, and methodological approaches to the study of Plain Anabaptist groups, and significant research findings about Plain Anabaptist populations.

The *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities* is a jointly sponsored journal of 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*'s predecessor at OSU was the *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies (JAPAS)*. Articles from volumes 1–6 of *JAPAS* can still be accessed, free of charge, in the Knowledge Bank of the OSU Libraries: <https://kb.osu.edu/handle/1811/54888>.

If you would like to discuss ideas for manuscripts for possible publication in the journal, please contact Joe Donnermeyer ([donnermeyer.1@gmail.com](mailto:donnermeyer.1@gmail.com)) or Steve Nolt ([nolts@etown.edu](mailto:nolts@etown.edu)). Visit <https://plainanabaptistjournal.org/index.php/JPAC/about> to access additional detail about *JPAC*, including author guidelines. As these guidelines state: "Submissions should be in Microsoft Word, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, left justification only, and no headers or footers." We allow prospective authors to select from one of two styles for citations: the American Psychological Association (APA) style (7th edition) and the Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition). In this manner, we recognize the diversity of backgrounds of prospective authors, especially because standard publication formats vary among academic disciplines.