

## Old Order Brethren Groups

The Brethren groups included here descend from the Anabaptist-Pietist movement that began in 1708 near the German village of Schwarzenau under the leadership of Alexander Mack. In 1881, an Old Order movement took shape within the Brethren community, taking the name Old German Baptist Brethren. That group remains the largest Old Order Brethren body, and all the other groups, described below, stem from that movement. All Old Order Brethren groups practice trine-immersion baptism and a love feast that includes a simple meal, footwashing, and communion. Nonconformity to society is strongly emphasized by all groups. The most obvious expression of this teaching is the distinctive, traditional Brethren dress and appearance. Most Old Order Brethren drive cars; only two groups use horse-and-buggy transportation, as noted below.

### Old German Baptist Brethren, Original Conference

The Old Order branch of the Brethren church originated at the division of the main Brethren group in 1881. It remains the largest Old Order Brethren brotherhood today. Several thousand people gather each year at the annual meeting, the location of which rotates from east to west. The agreement in these annual conference decisions helps maintain identity in a changing society.

State	Congregations	Baptized Members
California	2	63
Georgia	1	53
Indiana	9	945
Kansas	5	326
Missouri	1	55
Montana	1	48
New York	1	15
Ohio	13	816
Pennsylvania	6	374
Virginia	4	586
Washington	1	82
West Virginia	1	46
Wisconsin	2	189
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3,598</b>

## Old Brethren

This body of Brethren was organized in 1913 by former members of the Old German Baptist Brethren. They opposed some changes taking place in the parent group, such as the granting of the use of the telephone and later the use of trucks for work. Over the years, however, they slowly accepted these things. In faith and practice, they are similar to their parent church; in organization, the group is distinctive in having a congregational form of church government whereas other Brethren groups have an annual conference structure. At present, there are two subgroups within the Old Brethren.

State	Congregations	Baptized Members
Arkansas	1	60
California	1	63
Indiana	3	236
Ohio	2	66
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>425</b>

## Old Order German Baptist Church (horse & buggy group)

This group of Brethren separated from the Old German Baptist Brethren in 1921. They retain the use of horse-and-buggy travel although they permit the use of tractors for farming. They maintain an ancient order of the Brethren form of dress. This group is sometimes known as “Petitioners” because prior to their formation they had petitioned their annual conference to hold to older ways.

State	Congregations	Baptized Members
Mississippi	1	11
Ohio	3	170
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>181</b>

## Old Brethren German Baptists (horse & buggy group)

This group of Brethren separated from the Old German Baptist Brethren around 1929–1930. They retain the oldest and most conservative order of the simple life and of the Brethren order of dress. They do not permit automobile ownership, tractors, electricity, or telephones.

State	Congregations	Baptized Members
Indiana	1	70
Missouri	1	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>120</b>

## German Baptist Brethren Church

This Old Order Brethren group was organized in 1999 by former members of the Old German Baptist Brethren. They are opposed to all insurance and to participation in the Social Security system. Members are not to have their pictures taken, and their dress is a bit more conservative than that of the main Old German Baptist Brethren. The group is sometimes known by the name of its early elder, Eldon Flory.

State	Congregations	Baptized Members
Missouri	1	48
Pennsylvania	1	14
Wisconsin	1	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>84</b>

## Old German Baptist Brethren, New Conference

Old German Baptist Brethren, New Conference formed in 2009, following a separation from the Old German Baptist Brethren. New Conference members were more open to organized outreach work, as well as group Bible studies outside of Sunday worship. Openness to the use of the internet was also an issue, as was the role of annual meeting.

State	Congregations	Baptized Members
California	2	334
Florida	—	2
Georgia	—	10
Idaho	2	63
Indiana	5	245
Kansas	3	126
Michigan	1	5
Montana	1	24
New Mexico	1	30
Ohio	12	828
Oregon	1	70
Pennsylvania	1	68
Virginia	2	76
Washington	3	220
Wisconsin	1	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2,110</b>

## Old German Baptist Church

This body of Old Order Brethren was organized in 2020 by former members of the Old German Baptist Brethren, Original Conference. Their faith and practice are quite similar to the parent group with the exception that they take a more reserved approach to some new technologies.

State	Congregations	Baptized Members
California	1	63
Indiana	1	31
Kansas	1	28
Missouri	1	20
New York	1	35
Ohio	1	34
Pennsylvania	5	363
Wisconsin	1	66
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>640</b>

Compiled from recent Brethren directories and personal contacts by Edsel Burdge Jr., Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College, 1 Alpha Drive, Elizabethtown, PA 17022

August 2023