The Rev. Elden Zuern, Hazen, led worship in both English and German languages. For video of portions of the Advent service, click on the "videos" link underneath Beulah Beacon top stories at www.bhgnews.com.

Despite temperatures barely above 0, over 50 people from throughout Mercer County attended Die Deutsche Stammhhalter chapter of the German from Ruanda Heritage Society's 26th annual Advent service Sunday at St. Paul Lutheran Church northeast of Hazen.

The service included songs sung by chapter members and the "Pick City singers" in both German and English, as well as a sermon by the Rev. Elden Zuern delivered once in English and once in German.

Zuern has spoken German all of his life, he said, though he had the luxury of beginning school speaking both English and German as a child. Chapter secretary/treasurer/representative Viola Schielke, Beulah, and her husband, chapter vice-president Ervin, grew up speaking only German. According to Viola, Ervin is fond of saying he attended school to learn a foreign language: English.

Die Deutsche Stammhhalter consists of 56 members. Dues are $50 per year, and consist of a newsletter two or three times every year. Viola said Germans from Russia are known for their strong work ethic, and the local chapter stands forever proud of their common heritage.

"You don’t know who you are until you know where you came from." Viola said.

Die Deutsche Stammhhalter members sing during the Advent service on Sunday. Front row from left: Shirley Stern, Golden Valley; Esther Eisenbeis, Beulah; Ellen Renner, Beulah; Hilda Backfin, Beulah; and Lorrena Zuern, Hazen. Second row: Leona Brecht, Golden Valley; Kay Miller, Beulah; and Rudy Hildebrand, Hazen. Back row: Gilbert Ost, Beulah; Stanley Miller, Beulah; Wilbert Harsh, Pick City; and the Rev. Elden Zuern, Hazen.

Chapter member Gilbert Ost, Beulah, plays guitar and sings "One Little Boy" during the advent service.

Left: Chapter members and the "Pick City singers," who regularly appear throughout the region to sing old-time favorites, combine to sing "I am so glad each Christmas Eve." Front row from left: Helen Cottar, Hazen; Lucille Kruckenberg, Hazen; and Wilma Kilber, Pick City. Back row: Wilbert Hanson, Pick City; Hilda Backfin, Beulah; Elmer Lauf, Hazen; Alvin Kneid, Hazen; Emil Lauf, Hazen; and Glen Kruckenberg, Hazen.