

Oneidas Plan To Welcome Bishop

Walter Heath Jones, seventh Episcopal Bishop of South Dakota, will visit Holy Apostles Episcopal Church in Oneida on Sunday. His appearance will be in appreciation for the important part the church, which came to its present site with the Oneidas in 1822, has played in influencing Indian missions in the Midwest.

Bishop Jones will speak during the 7:30 a.m. Low Mass and the 10 a.m. Solemn High Mass. A light breakfast will follow the early service and a feast will be served after the later worship in the undercroft of the church.

Hymns in the Oneida language will be presented by the Oneida Singers during the High Mass. The chairman and other officials of the tribe will be in procession for the late Mass. Father Paul Cheek, vicar to the Oneidas and his assistant, Father Tom Sewall will be hosts for the day.

An important letter about the Bishop's visit was sent from the church to all members of the congregation. Any member who did not receive a letter should contact the church office during the day.

According to Cheek, the majority of the Oneida and Dakota tribes belong to the Episcopal church and Bishop Jones is expected to discuss matters of common concern. Neither he nor Jones knows of an Episcopal church that is as basic an Indian as Holy Apostles.

Jones is known as a great defender of Indian rights. He developed the Dakota leadership training program that has brought many deacons and priests into service of the church and people. A native of St. Boniface, Manitoba, Canada, Bishop Jones is a graduate of the University of Manitoba and St. John's and served several pastorates.

His consecration during the Niobrara Convocation on the Pine Ridge Reservation was an eloquent expression of his long and dedicated interest in the Indian church people and Indian affairs generally. During his years as Canon to the Ordinary and increasingly since he became bishop, Jones has worked for the unity and in-

his diocese.

Holy Apostles, says Cheek, is the ancestral church for the majority of the Oneidas. Anglican missionaries were sent to the Oneidas in 1702 in New York state and the first chapel was built in 1703 with funds supplied by Queen Anne. Members of the tribe supplied food for Washington's troops at Valley Forge and have always fought on the side of independence. The Oneida cemetery holds bodies of veterans of the War of 1812 and all other major conflicts.

The church came to the present settlement near Duck Creek with the Oneidas, in 1822. The small log church built there was the oldest structure in the state. Though white settlers tried to force the Oneidas out, the church stood firm with the tribe in resisting pressure, reports Cheek.

According to Father Paul, the Oneidas today, probably more than any other tribe, have entered the economy of the area and the number of Oneidas on public assistance is the lowest of any tribe. The Oneidas are trying to seek expression of Christian faith within the integrity of its ancient heritage.

The present stone church building dates back to 1836 and is the third structure used since the Oneidas arrived in 1822.

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