

Baptist Church hits 150 years

OHSWEKEN — Sunday will mark the 150th anniversary of the Ohsweken Baptist Church. It should be quite a celebration.

Many notables have been invited, including Lt.-Gov. Lincoln Alexander, and M.P. Bob Speller, former Ontario treasurer Robert Nixon, and Chief Councillor William Montour and their wives. Not to mention the Six Nations council members and their spouses.

An interesting feature will be a re-enactment of the way services were conducted 150 years ago. A speaker will quote scripture in English and this will be promptly translated into the native language by a speaker sharing the platform. The English speaker will then give a short sermon which will also be translated by the second speaker.

This is how it was done 150 years ago, not only at the Baptist church but also at the Anglican churches.

Not many older people were fluent in English in those days. At the Anglican church, the scriptures and sermon would be translated into Mohawk. At the Baptist church, it was translated into Tuscarora. The translator was called an interpreter

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because he often had to interpret or explain what was meant by unfamiliar English expressions.

On Sunday, the Oneida language will be used in the re-enactment because only two members of the present congregation are fluent in the Tuscarora language and they are both very old.

Also in attendance will be the Oneida choir from the Oneida Indian Settlement near London, Ont. They will be dressed in traditional clothes and will sing in the Oneida language.

The morning service will commence at 11 a.m. Rev. Tom Morikawa, a former minister at Ohsweken Baptist Church, will

deliver the anniversary message. The Jonathan Sisters will sing in the morning and again at the evening service which will begin at 7 p.m. and will again include the Oneida native choir.

The Sunday school rooms will have exhibits of old photographs of the church, the village, as well as former pastors and members.

As a special project of this 150th anniversary, the church is raising funds for a wheelchair elevator. It will lift wheelchairs up to the level of the main auditorium or down to the lower auditorium where church suppers are served.

Anyone wishing to donate to this elevator fund may call the Ohsweken Baptist Church at 519-445-2908 or Pastor Peter R. Bongers at his residence, 519-445-2082.