**Who Was Here Before Us?**

Rev. Michael Carney
Commission on Intercultural Ministries

The vast region served by the Diocese of Northern California contains the ancestral homelands of dozens of Native tribes. Who are the people who came before us? What can we learn from them? Are they still here today?

I've just retired as an Episcopal priest, most recently serving two congregations on the Ute Reservation in northeast Utah, and my wife and I have settled in Grass Valley. Recently I attended a valuable webinar presented by Redbud Resource Group, a Native organization headquartered in Santa Rosa. If you'd like to hear more about this subject, check out Redbud's website (redbudresourcegroup.org) or email my colleague Deacon Tina Campbell (tinacampbell@comcast.net) or me (keepwalking277@gmail.com).

Briefly, their presentation began by identifying several ways people from the dominant cultures reinforce stereotypes about California Indians:

- by referring to Native people only in the past tense
- by making judgments about what Native people need
- by speaking for Native people, rather than amplifying their own voices

The workshop was called "Going Beyond Land Acknowledgments," and it offered concrete opportunities for church members and congregations to avoid these pitfalls. On behalf of the Commission on Intercultural Ministries, Tina and I plan to invite conversations within the deaneries, and if desired, to share opportunities for connecting with Native groups in each region. Please get in touch if you'd like to hear more.