

November 11, 2018

Mission Moment

Did you know the United States has more than 573 federally recognized Indian nations? The total American Indian and Alaska Native population is 2.9 million, less than 1% of the U.S. population. Of The United Methodist Church's more than 32,000 U.S. congregations, 157 are predominantly Native American. Many are located in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

Here locally, now based in Millsboro, the Nanticoke Tribe, meaning "tidewater people" was discovered by John Smith in 1608 while exploring the Chesapeake and Nanticoke Rivers. They thrived on fishing, hunting and farming and were known as the "Best Merchants" of all the tribes in the region.

In 1881, the Indian Mission United Methodist Church in Millsboro was constructed to provide a place to join together for religious devotions. Today, the Nanticoke people continue to hold religious services at this location and it continues to provide cohesiveness for the Nanticoke to retain their Native heritage and culture.

While we observe Native American Ministries Sunday on the third Sunday of Easter, we are also encouraged to celebrate Native American Heritage Month in November.

Native American Heritage Month gives us an opportunity to reach out to indigenous groups in our communities and learn about the rich diversities of the cultures that have existed long before Christopher Columbus journeyed to "the new world".