



# *A Statement of Belief for St. James' Episcopal Church Mesilla Park, NM*

November 24, 2009

As members of 'one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church,' we, the Rector, the Clergy, and the Vestry of St. James' Episcopal Church (a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion), put forward this statement of foundational beliefs. This is not to be understood as a comprehensive statement of our belief or practices, but as an expression of some of our foundational beliefs.

- We seek to retain continuity with the beliefs of Christianity as the Church has received them from God (cf. "The Vincentian Canon" found in Vincent of Lerin's *Commonitorium*, chapter 4, paragraph 3).
- We put forward the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed as basic standards of Christian belief (*The Book of Common Prayer* - BCP - 53-54; 326-327; 851-852).
- We put forward the Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral as our foundation for ecumenical dialogue (BCP - 876-878).
- In harmony with the teaching of the Reformation, we believe:
  - That as Christians we are simultaneously justified before God, and yet are also sinners until the Parousia (cf. Martin Luther's statement of *simul justus et peccator*).
  - That we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by our own effort (cf. Ephesians 2:8).
- To clarify due to contemporary challenges, we believe:
  - That the love of God and atoning work of the cross reaches out to all people (cf. 1 John 2:1-2).
  - In the authority of the Holy Bible for salvation and the ordering our lives (cf. Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, point #1).
  - That the visible church is a mixed body of both sinners and saints (cf. St. Augustine's *City of God*, Book 3, chapter 32).
  - In the Trinity of God – one in substance and three in persons as expressed in the Athanasian Creed.
  - In the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ (cf. Nicene Creed).
  - That Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, died, and was physically resurrected (cf. Hebrews 4:15 and Nicene Creed).
  - That Jesus Christ was, and is fully God and fully man (Nicene Creed).
  - That the atoning work of Jesus Christ provides the only way to God (cf. John 14:6).
  - That marriage is a sacrament, and provides the only holy avenue for sexual relations (cf. Hebrews 13:4).
  - That marriage is a life-long union between a man and a woman, made before God and the Church (cf. BCP - 861).
  - In the sanctity of life in all stages of life, and that in cases involving a question as to the existence of life, the moral response is to behave in a manner that presumes life exists (cf. The Decalogue, Jeremiah 1:5, and St. Augustine's *City of God*, Book 1, chapter 20).