

Liquid AGM Minister's Report, 30 May 2023

Introduction:

Since I have only been your Minister for the past four months, I feel somewhat unqualified to bring you this AGM Report. First, I would like to pay tribute to Paul Cameron for the incredible work he performed as Interim Minister over many months. Second, I would like to thank the Elders and rotating Minute-Takers for their wisdom and support. Finally, thank you all, the Liquid Church family, for your warm welcome of Liz and me. We are still getting to know you all properly but we are thankful for the connections we have made already.

Paul Cameron's Interim Ministry:

I have chosen to insert two excerpts from the 56-page Report Paul collated for me when I began my ministry at Liquid Church (see pages 2 & 3). The first excerpt outlines the primary issues you all identified at the beginning of his tenure, and the second excerpt reveals what emerged as you sought God, engaged in conversations and formulated your new identity. I am sure you all appreciated Paul's leadership, expertise and sensitivity to the journey you were all on in transition from "what was" to "what would be". I therefore pay tribute to Paul on your behalf for helping you all position Liquid Church for its next exciting season.

2023 To Date:

I began at Liquid Church on the last Sunday of January 2023. Our first Sunday Gatherings theme was "*The Journey of Jesus to Jerusalem*", during the Lenten Season leading to Easter Sunday. Our current series is "God's Empowering Presence" as we explore a theology of the Holy Spirit, identifying our personal giftings and the practical outworking of God's empowering presence amongst us as a worshipping community. In the midst of those two series, we have witnessed the baptisms of 6 people, praise the Lord!

Administratively, we have now mapped and listed the processes for all the tasks involved in delivering our Sunday Gatherings. Stu has recently implemented WorshipTools, which will streamline and automate our volunteer scheduling and communications. A recent well-attended Saturday morning working-bee emptied our two storage units, keeping some items, donating other items to the Tanti Community House and Fusion Op Shop, recycling some and dumping the rest. The Elders are currently working on reforming Lachy's job description by mutual agreement. We meet fortnightly for an Admin Meeting and I want to thank Stu and Lachy for their excellent administrative skills and commitment to helping our community function smoothly.

Future Ponderings:

Liquid Church, in its current iteration, has been described metaphorically as an "embryo" that needs to be nurtured carefully to the fullness of its new life. For me, that means that we must ensure we prayerfully continue to listen to God's leading and ensure the DNA of Liquid (as outlined in the Church Profile document on page 3) is preserved. The potential to revert back to what has been, to conform to our traditional ways of doing church, framing up systems too tightly, playing it too safe and not taking risky steps (or leaps) of faith may lead us to lose our passion, missional spirit and our new identity, which is still being formed by the Spirit.

Conclusion:

As a positive step towards an "integrated whole-of-life approach to discipleship" you will notice that the Elders have approved \$5,000 in our budget to help fund an excellent Veta Discipleship Mentoring Program led by Ben Chong. Daily discipleship (following Jesus) is the foundation of all we are and all we are called to do as Christians. Our worship, community formation, missional engagement and making new disciples will all flow from our willingness to be mentored and our ability in turn, to mentor others.

Jim Catford



Transition Partnership

PHASE ONE	Heritage	We have reviewed how the church has been shaped and formed (Appreciative Inquiry), while also acknowledging the grief and loss of change in a process of lament (Change Wheel; Exodus 13, Moses and God's people, wilderness, long way; Prayer for Indifference, Prayer of Abandonment) <i>Reinforced by 'things we can say together' Sunday input</i>	Elders 22 Aug Gathering 25 Aug+
	Identity/Mission	We have spent time renewing our sense of purpose, direction and mission (Appreciative Inquiry; Luke 10:1-11) <i>Reinforced by 'things we can say together' Sunday input</i>	Elders 21 Sept Gathering 26 Sept+
	Leadership	We have reviewed Liquid's leadership practices and ways of organizing, and considered possible leadership shapes, structure and processes as/if necessary (Acts 2:14, Eph 4:11-16) <i>Reinforced by 'things we can say together' Sunday input</i>	Elders 19 Oct Gathering 24 Oct+
	Connections/Partnerships	We have engaged/addressed the question "is there a future for Liquid?" (and affirmed there is!); and spent time (re)discovering and revisiting the relationships and networks Liquid has beyond itself...and their link with, and influence on, any preferred future shape of Liquid (1 Cor 12) <i>Reinforced by 'things we can say together' Sunday input</i>	Elders 16 Nov Gathering 21 Nov+
PHASE 2	Emerging Liquid	Now we begin synthesizing the transitional work, and in accordance with Liquid's DNA, discern primary elements of an 'emerging Liquid', including a simple summary statement, a 'vision' or goal, and several possible actions and missions. (Three Zones/Three Horizons+, Joshua 1) <i>Later we will write it up as 'the way forward' synthesizing all the transitional work into a church/ministry profile for ministry/leadership appointment conversations that will espouse and nurture the identity, theology and praxis of Liquid, and the outworking of its mission and ministry in order for Liquid to flourish in its next season.</i>	Elders 4 Dec Gathering ?6 Dec +Elders Feb-Mar +Gathering?

What follows is Paul's personal (somewhat anecdotal) summary of discoveries, findings and imaginations from the Liquid Church Transition process to date (30 Nov). These themes could form a framework for Phase 2 outcomes and be a flightpath to landing on a simple and succinct statement.

******What might you—Add? Delete? Nudge? Affirm? Question? Re-word? Simplify?******

Who are we? We are Christians (but not the only Christians). As a church, we are people of God (but not the only people of God). And the future of the people of God is within the people of God because the Holy Spirit is within people of God; therefore the future of Liquid Church is within the people of God (who are Liquid) because the Holy Spirit is within Liquid.

What are we here for? Growing individually and corporately, Liquid church can be small enough to care and large enough to dare. Our theology, a generous orthodoxy, will lead us to engage and understand our cultural context and enable each of us to be developing a missional heart for others; a heart that is less about programs and more about people; particularly locally; hearts that love God and love people.

As people of God Liquid Church has Jesus at the centre, both when we gather together, and in the way we live when we find ourselves, as an order of local missionaries, scattered in our homes, neighbourhood, workplaces and broader community, each of us seeking and fulfilling the vocation God is calling us into...

What do we look like? We love gathering together, both in a big group to celebrate, worship and 'break bread' together; and in small groups that might be a house church, a 'life group', an Open Table, a 'missional community' (and more?). We desire creativity yet consistency in establishing rhythms around the timing and location of these practices.

Our leadership preference Liquid Church seeks a collaborative and transformational leadership rather than a positional and transactional one; a person (or persons) evidencing a lived out emphasis on being 'with' Elders rather than 'over'/'under'/'for'/'against' them (Acts 2:14); a person manifesting those aspects of the 5-fold ministry pattern (Ephesians 4) needed to provide a generative balance among other leaders and the Liquid community (noting 'Apostle/Prophet/Evangelist' gaps)



Church Profile

Liquid Church is a small, connected community who live, work and play on the Mornington Peninsula, a beautiful piece of God's country south east of Melbourne (roughly an hour from the CBD).

Our history

As a local church we believe that we are part of a much bigger story of God that crosses generations and geographies. Our specific story started in around 2006 when a group of local Mornington Peninsula people felt a stirring to pray for a new church in the Mount Martha area.

Liquid Church started in a lounge room in 2008. It's been over a decade now and we are a thriving community from all walks of life. We are part of the movement of [Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania](#) and enjoy the support and autonomy it provides. Our church has continued to be an open, welcoming community, marked by a sense of creativity, innovation, hospitality and genuine community.

Our DNA

Over the past few years we have had somewhat of a wilderness experience, with transitions of leadership and the ongoing COVID-19 situation. In July 2021 we entered a season of 'intentional transition', reflecting on our narrative, theology, mission, praxis, connections and leadership. As we reflect through the seasons of Liquid Church, a strong thread of DNA has continued. This is a sense of exploration, desire to experiment, learn and respond to how to be God's church in this time in history, in this culture and place. We have a commitment to our local neighbourhoods and to seek to have integrated, whole-of-life approaches to discipleship. We're about hospitality, creating a welcoming, fun and transformative place for spiritual formation and deep spirited friendships.

Our Dreams (vision, mission)

Simply put we are about loving Jesus and making him known.

But as one small piece of God's kingdom, our distinct purpose is to:

- Be an order of local missionaries – scattered in our homes, neighbourhood, workplaces and the broader community, each of us fulfilling the vocation God is calling us to
- Be a home base, family, connected community
- Be a welcoming place for those seeking to explore faith, healing and restoration in their lives
- Help people find their place in God and releasing them in their gifts and passions
- Be creative, innovative and explore new ways to engage and serve the people in our everyday lives and the Mornington Peninsula community

Our community and ways of gathering

When you visit Liquid Church you will find a diverse group of people who truly love meeting together: The young and not-so-young, Christians and those just curious, coffee drinkers, surfers, tradies, business people, creatives, kids, teachers and more.

Since COVID-19 times we are now a small committed core of about 50 people with ages ranging from young children to retired and everything in between.

Liquid Church meets every Sunday at 5pm at Mount Martha Community House – a beautiful heritage listed building that overlooks Port Phillip Bay. We have met in various places around Mornington and Mount Martha over the years and are open to new places that help us to create a welcoming atmosphere.

Our gatherings vary from week to week but are characterised by times of prayer, learning, singing, interaction, reflection and good food. We're focused on people more than programs; it's more like a family coming together than a 'service'. There's an ease and simplicity to how we gather, we love to connect and celebrate, worship, be inspired and share food together. We encourage people to 'have a go' as the Spirit releases His gifts and passions. We like to be flexible around some clear rhythms and practices.

We seek to provide a place of rest, while also being a vibrant place of fun, refreshment, and challenge. We invite and encourage transformational encounters with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in life's raw and rich moments.

You'll see this come alive in our Sunday gatherings, beach baptisms, around our dinner tables, and in our everyday connections in cafes, parks and homes.

All are welcome, always.

