

Here is a comprehensive list of questions, categorized for a structured and insightful interview:

I. The Beginning: The Vision and the People

- What was the original vision or mission for this church? What need did you feel it was filling in the community or among the founding group?
- Who were the key individuals or families involved in the very first discussions about starting the church? How did you all come together?
- Where did you hold the very first meetings or worship services? Can you describe what those early gatherings were like?
- How was the church's name chosen? Were there other names considered?
- What were some of the biggest challenges you faced in those first few months or years? And what were some of the early successes that made you feel it was all worthwhile?

II. The Atmosphere: Community and Culture

- How would you describe the atmosphere and sense of community among the early members? What made it feel like a family?
- Can you recall any specific events, traditions, or moments from the early days that you feel truly capture the spirit of the church?
- What was the worship style like in the beginning? How has it changed or stayed the same over the years?
- How did the church first engage with the local community? What were some of the initial outreach or service projects?

III. Milestones and Memories

- What were the first major milestones for the church (e.g., getting a permanent building, hiring a full-time pastor, starting a specific ministry)?
- Who were the first pastors or leaders? What was their leadership style like, and what do you remember most about them?
- Can you share a personal story or memory from the early days that stands out to you and holds a special meaning?
- Do you have any old photographs, bulletins, or other memorabilia from the early days that we could preserve in the church's archives?

IV. Reflection and Legacy

- As you look at the church today, how do you feel it has lived up to or evolved from its original vision?
- What advice or wisdom would you like to pass on to the current members and leaders of the church?
- What do you hope this church's legacy will be for future generations in the community?
- Is there anything else you think is essential for the church's history that we haven't discussed?

Tips for a Successful Interview:

- **Listen Actively:** Be prepared to listen and allow the founding member to tell their story. Don't be afraid to deviate from your list to follow a compelling anecdote.
- **Be Respectful:** Remember, this is a deeply personal history for them. Thank them for their time and for sharing their memories.
- **Document Everything:** Ask for their full name, the date of the interview, and consider recording the conversation (with their permission) to ensure accuracy.
- **Context is Key:** Ask follow-up questions to understand the context of their memories. For example, if they mention a specific challenge, ask what year it was and how the church overcame it.