



FRANKLIN FIRST UMC STEEPLE BELL NEWSLETTER

April 2025

APRIL IS NATIONAL “DONATE LIFE” MONTH

Have you thought about being an organ donor? I am registered on my driver's license as a donor. There are more than 100,000 people in the United States waiting for an organ transplant, but many will die before they can have the opportunity for transplant because there are not enough donor organs available.

Most major faiths accept organ donation, and some believe the decision to donate organs to be an act of charity. One person can save eight lives and improve the quality of 75 more. Pediatric donations are needed as well.



There's no standard cutoff age for donating organs. The decision to use your organs is based on the health of your organs, not your age. Very few medical conditions keep you from donating. You may not be able to donate all your organs, but other organs and tissues are fine.

Organ recipients are chosen through a computer system, and strict standards are maintained to ensure fairness. The recipient's wealth or popularity does not move them to the top of the list.

The organ donor's family never pays for donation. Many tests are performed for the patient who has chosen to be a donor to ascertain that they will not recover before a medical team proceeds harvesting organs. Should the family wish it, an open-casket funeral is perfectly acceptable following organ and tissue harvest.

I have known a few folks who have benefited from organ donation. One gentleman in my home church received a heart transplant and lived with great quality of life for a number of years thereafter. My brother Kevin received a kidney. A person who I knew through college received a lung transplant. Each of these people had a new lease on life following the gift of transplant.

Want to be a donor? Sign up with the state's donor registry and mark your choice on your driver's license or state ID. Be sure that your family knows your wishes, as hospitals ask next of kin before taking organs. You can include your wishes in a living will if you have one.

Choosing to give the gift of life is a sacred act of love and sacrifice. I encourage you to consider it.

Pastor Laura



Confirmation Sunday

Franklin First's class of students (Kaylee Womack, Samantha Womack, Mallory Chilcutt, and Gracelynn Lucas) will take their confirmation vows on Sunday April 27. We will have a special service and will likely be welcoming family and friends of these students. We are proud of the work they have put into their religious training during this school year. We also want to thank mentors Dorothy Rayburg, Kim Chewning, Lee Saunders, and Connie Bolinger. Congregation, this is

one major step in a lifetime of faith growth. We continue to have the responsibility of helping these young people mature in their faith journey.

District Confirmation Gathering


Franklin First was asked by our District Superintendent Suzanne Allen to host a district-wide event on Sunday April 6 for all area confirmation classes. They will be joining us from 3:00 – 5:30 that afternoon, and students will be helping pack our snack packs, will do an art project, have worship, participate in a learning opportunity with West Ohio Conference staff, have a question and answer period with Rev. Allen, share communion, and end with a teen-friendly meal. Thanks to those who have volunteered to help with the event.



Symbols of the Passion


Jeff Sams and Pastor Laura will be continuing the "Symbols of the Passion" dialogue series through Easter Sunday. It is easy, when we are very familiar with a Bible story, to skim over it lightly and not allow the nuances of the narrative deepen our faith. There is a lot of detail in each piece of the passion of Jesus that will broaden our understanding of the sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Thanks to Jeff, and in his absence Chris Womack Lorton, Connie Bolinger, and Kaylee Glossip, for lending their talents to this unique form of message-sharing.



2025 LENTEN SERMON SERIES
MARCH 9 APRIL 18

The Symbols of the PASSION



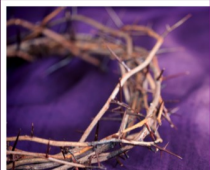
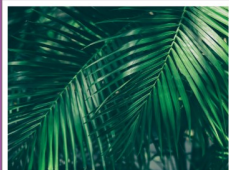

Palm Sunday Service
April 13th - 10:45 am

Maundy Thursday Service
April 17th - 7 pm

Good Friday Service
April 18th - 7 pm

Easter Sunday
April 20- 10:45 am

Holy Week Services



Mother's Day is May 11th

Bring an apron! We will be enjoying a fun and special day honoring the women among us, as well as those who have gone before. You are encouraged to bring an apron...it can be one that belonged to a family member, friend, or one you currently use. These items will be a festive part of the day's worship. Invite those lovely ladies to join you and make it a day to remember.



The Noisy Bucket Continues To Ring

Heifer International will be the recipient organization for the funds collected by our kids in their noisy bucket campaign during Lent. Heifer International provides animals, water wells, and girl's education in impoverished areas around the world. When the campaign wraps up, our Franklin First kids will decide how they want to use the monies collected. Thank you for supporting this worth-while mission.

Angel Shop Blessings

Since January, the Angel Shop formal attire boutique has been open on Sundays for students wanting to dress their best for Prom. Director Jenny Chilcutt continues to receive donations of women's and men's attire, along with many pairs of shoes and jewelry. The Angel Shop remains set up in the entryway and is festive and inviting. Word is continuing to spread about this ministry, and each week new teens have come to select their party clothes.



Leave a Lasting Legacy

Want to make a lasting impact on our church community? By contributing to our Permanent Endowment Fund, you can ensure that your generosity continues to bless future generations. Your gift will be invested wisely to support our mission and offer hope to those in need. Join us in this meaningful endeavor and create a lasting legacy. Contact Pastor Laura if you want to learn more.



Save the Date! Music Sunday

Music Sunday is set for May 18, and all of our music groups are working hard to prepare to bring the message in song that special Sunday. It will be worth inviting friends and family to enjoy the morning.



Give Franklin First a Review!

Take a moment to tell others what you like about Franklin First. Use the link below to give us a review on Google. The more positive reviews and interaction, the better placement we receive when individuals search for a church in Franklin.

[Click Here to leave a review!](#)

FHS Cast & Crew Dinner

May 2-4, Franklin High School students will be putting on the spring musical with Jeff Sams directing and others from Franklin First providing support. Franklin First UMC will be hosting a dinner at 3:00 on May 2 in the High School cafeteria for students and staff of the production. Pam Bishop is organizing the event and needs your help. What a great way to let our Franklin students know how much we value them!

FHS Presents Mean Girls: High School Edition

Cady Heron may have grown up on an African savanna, but nothing prepared her for the wild and vicious ways of her strange new home: suburban Illinois. How will this naïve newbie rise to the top of the popularity pecking order? By taking on The Plastics, a trio of lionized frenemies led by the charming but ruthless Regina George. But when Cady and her friends devise a "Revenge Party" to end Regina's reign, she learns the hard way that you can't cross a Queen Bee without getting stung.

Adapted from Fey's hit 2004 film, *Mean Girls* was nominated for a staggering 12 Tony Awards.

May 2nd @7pm; May 3rd @7pm; & May 4th @2pm

PLEASE NOTE: MEAN GIRLS is rated PG-13 and is recommended for students grade 7 and up.

Performances are located at the Junior High School at 750 East 4th Street, Franklin, Ohio.





Summer Time Snack Pack Program

Franklin First has been asked to participate in a summer weekend snack pack program to piggy-back onto the summer breakfast and lunch program run through Franklin Schools. Lori Feltner of the school system is asking if we would be part of the initiative from June 2 through August 8th. We have agreed, and plans are in process to decide how to cover the volunteer packing work. Fortunately, we have designated grant monies that will cover the cost of the food items. We will share more information soon.

Middletown Music Students

Megan Duff, VP of the Middletown Music Boosters, shared with us a need for three students in need who were unable to cover their participation fees. Thank you congregation for your support of this endeavor. \$616 was raised, and Megan forwarded the funds to the organization's treasurer.



Hop on Over for Our Easter Egg Hunt

Get ready for some egg-citing news! The Franklin First United Methodist Church Women's Circle is hosting our annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 12, 2025, at 11 am.

This year, we'll be gathering at Gerke Elementary School, located at 312 Sherman Dr, Franklin, OH 45005. Bring your baskets and your smiles as we celebrate Easter with an egg hunt.

We understand that April weather can be unpredictable. If the weather doesn't cooperate, don't worry! We'll simply move the Easter Egg Hunt indoors to the Franklin First United Methodist Church. Keep an eye on our church website and social media pages for any weather-related updates on the morning of the event.



April & May Donation Drive for "The Pantry"

The Mission and Outreach Team is excited to announce a special donation drive during April and May to collect baby care items for "The Pantry," our local food pantry. This initiative aims to support families in need by providing essential items for their little ones.

Collecting baby care items is crucial because many families in our community struggle to afford these necessities. By donating, we can help ensure that every baby has access to the care they need for a healthy start in life. Your contributions will make a significant difference in the lives of these families, providing them with much-needed support and relief.

- Diapers (all sizes)
- Baby wipes
- Baby formula
- Baby food (jars and pouches)
- Bottles and pacifiers
- Baby shampoo and soap
- Baby lotion and diaper rash cream
- Bibs and burp cloths



We appreciate your generosity and commitment to helping our community. Together, we can make a positive impact and support families in need. Thank you for your contributions!

Drop off your donations at Franklin First UMC:

Every little bit counts! Thank you for your support.

Birthdays

April 04	Kim Chewning
April 04	Trisha Dicken
April 05	Dakota Raynor
April 11	Lillian Russell-Cheek
April 12	Greg Trout
April 17	Kailey Chilcutt
April 30	Marg Farmer

Anniversaries

April 07	Joe & Marty Wright
April 13	Rick & Lisa Dillon
April 15	Kaylee & Nathan Glossip
April 20	Chris Womack & Brad Lorton
April 29	Jennifer & Matt Schramm

Kroger Community Rewards

Have you checked the bottom of your Kroger's Receipt?

If it does not list our church as your designated Community Rewards Beneficiary, follow the instructions on the back and get signed up now!

Please note our new church number! You do not need to change your current account; this is for new sign-ups.

Go to: www.krogers.com

New account users:

go to "Register"

Create Account

Or Sign-in

Go to: Community – Community Rewards

Click: Enroll now

Church #: RK151



Join our Faith Seekers group
on Sunday mornings
at 9:15 am.
All are invited!

Croppin' Good Time

We had the BEST time at our Croppin' Good Time event! It was great to see so many creative minds come together, sharing ideas and crafting beautiful projects. A huge thank you goes out to the Women's Circle for hosting this fantastic event. Your dedication and hard work made everything run smoothly and created a welcoming atmosphere for everyone. Special thanks to Pam for organizing and coordinating all the details.

We're thrilled to announce that the Women's Circle raised almost \$1400 from the event!

We can't wait to do it all again! Join us this fall for another round of creativity and fun. Mark your calendars for September 19 & 20, and get ready for more crafting, laughter, and community spirit.

Stay tuned for more details, and we look forward to seeing you there!



Celebrating Scout Sunday

On Sunday, March 9th, we had a wonderful service celebrating Scout Sunday. We were inspired by Girl Scouts Gracie and Katie, who shared their experiences and achievements. Gene Saunders also took us on a nostalgic journey, reflecting on his time as a Boy Scout and Eagle Scout.

We appreciate the dedication and spirit of all our scouts and leaders. Thank you for making our community stronger!



April 2025 at Franklin First

Week of March 30th

2-Apr	Snack Pack Packing	1:30 PM
2-Apr	Choir Rehearsal	6:30 PM
2-Apr	Bells Rehearsal	7:30 PM

Week April 6th

6-Apr	Faith Seekers Group	9:15 AM
6-Apr	Angel Shop Open	12:30 -2pm
6-Apr	District Confirmation Gathering	3—5:30 PM
8-Apr	Mission Team	6:30 PM
9-Apr	Snack Pack Packing	3:00 PM
9-Apr	Choir Rehearsal	6:30 PM
9-Apr	Bells Rehearsal	7:30 PM
11-Apr	Easter Egg Hunt, Gerke Elementary	11 AM

Week of April 13th

13-Apr	Faith Seekers Group	9:15 AM
13-Apr	Palm Sunday Worship Service	10:45 AM
13-Apr	Angel Shop Open	12:30 - 2pm
14-Apr	Women's Circle Meeting	6:30 PM
16-Apr	Snack Pack Packing	1:30 PM
16-Apr	Choir Rehearsal	6:30 PM
16-Apr	Bells Rehearsal	7:30 PM
17-Apr	Maundy Thursday Service	7:00 PM
18-Apr	Good Friday Service	7:00 PM

Week of April 20th

20-Apr	Faith Seekers Group	9:15 AM
20-Apr	Easter Sunday Worship Service	10:45 AM
22-Apr	Staff Parish Relations	6:30 PM
23-Apr	Snack Pack Packing	1:30 PM
23-Apr	Choir Rehearsal	6:30 PM
23-Apr	Bells Rehearsal	7:30 PM

Week of April 27th

27-Apr	Faith Seekers Group	9:15 AM
27-Apr	Confirmation Sunday Worship	10:45 AM
27-Apr	Children's Choir	During Worship
27-Apr	Fellowship/Confirmation Reception	After Worship
30-Apr	Snack Pack Packing	1:30 PM
30-Apr	Choir Rehearsal	6:30 PM
30-Apr	Bells Rehearsal	7:30 PM



Annual Conference is May 28-31, 2025

The 56th session of the West Ohio Conference will be held May 28 - May 31, again this year at Capital University in Bexley. This will be the first

Ohio Episcopal Area annual conference in which Bishop Hee-Soo Jung presides. [Learn more.](#)

The theme for the session is Rise Up, Beloved: Trust in God's Promises, inspired by Mark 5:35-43, where Jesus encourages Jairus, a synagogue leader, to have faith that his deceased daughter will be raised from the dead. [Members can register by clicking here.](#) The deadline is May 1st.

Members at large are needed to represent the Great Miami River District. If you are interested in serving, please contact Nancy Newton at nnewton@wocumc.org.

Every year at Annual Conference, West Ohio Disaster Response Ministries collects kits and supplies for

Midwest Mission Distribution Center, a cooperating depot in the UMCOR relief supply network. However, this year's collection will also include Bishop Jung's **Hands of Hope Challenge**, where we see which district can contribute the most items! All kits and supplies [on this webpage](#) will be accepted. Let's make sure we welcome Bishop Jung with Hands of Hope!

Supplies will be collected on May 29 and May 30 at the Midwest Mission truck on site at the Capital Center. In order for your donation to count towards our district's total, you'll need to [FILL OUT THIS FORM](#) and give it to the Midwest Mission personnel at the truck. If you have questions or need more information, email [Mariellyn Grace](#).



Easter & Limitless Possibilities

by: Dr. Teresa Angle-Young

Easter: a breaking out, a triumph over fears and insecurities. Want to understand how that is possible?

If you've even been stalled in a crowded elevator, you know how uncomfortable that is. If you've ever been crushed in the crowd in a stadium, you know that it can be a bit scary. If you've ever been trapped in a New York City subway in a brownout, and gotten stuck underground — particularly on a busy Friday evening — you know that either panic or despair can quickly set in.

A lot of people suffer from claustrophobia to one degree or another. The word is from the *claustrum* ("a shut-in place") and Greek *phobos* ("fear"). It is the fear of having no escape and being closed in — especially in a small, confined space.

I've heard many people say that they have felt trapped in a dead-end job, a failing marriage or a house they can't afford. A lot of people feel trapped by circumstances. Some feel trapped by physical limitations, like illness or disability. Some feel limited by physical appearance, age or a lack of education. Most of us feel somewhat limited, trapped or as if we have obstacles that we cannot overcome. Some people feel trapped by grief, anger or regret. All these things leave us feeling limited. They hold us back. They make us feel powerless.

Easter reminds us of the beginning of something new, of a fresh start, of a time to triumph over our fears and insecurities. Easter offers a time to focus on the possi-



bilities of life, rather than what we perceive as limitations. It is a time to trust that God through Christ has removed the barriers that hold us back, that keep us in fear or that close our hearts and minds.

It is the dawning of a new day, of a new life. The stone sealing Jesus' tomb was rolled away. Similarly, all that stands in our way — all that holds us

back — is gone. The Easter story shows us that so much more is possible than what we allow ourselves to see. The Easter story empowers us, and we empower others to live fully into the vision of life that God has for us.

What do you want to do differently today? Do you want a more peaceful, loving relationship? What do you have to do to make that happen? Do you want better grades in school? Do you want to get out of debt or start to save for retirement? Do you want to make new friends or go out more? Do you want to give more of your time to make the world a better place? Do you want to tutor a child or become a foster parent or adopt an animal companion or feed the hungry? What do you want your life to look like from today on?

God has moved the rock away from the tomb. God has shown us through Christ that nothing is impossible. God has granted us freedom to live an unimaginable life, to live with joy and hope, to redefine relationships and how we see them, to let the lives of those people who have loved us and enriched our lives continue to shine out into the world. In the Resurrection story we

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

are reminded that each new day brings with it new possibilities.

What if we took the rolling away of the stone of the tomb seriously? Could we end war? Could we end poverty? What could we accomplish for the good of our families, our communities and the world if we took seriously the Resurrection message that anything is possible, even to triumph over death? If we lived with that sort of confidence, what might we do? If we believed in ourselves and in God's love and promise with real passion rather than just an intellectual assent to the idea of what it means to follow Christ, what could we do with our lives?

What would a life without limits really look like? When we only see the obstacles in our lives, when we

focus on the negative, what miracles do we miss? What opportunities do we forego?

The Resurrection story reminds us that it matters not where you've been or where you are today. It matters not if you are old or young, married or single, gay or straight, rich or poor, well-educated or barely educated. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate that through Christ, the rock has been rolled away, the obstacles have been removed, life as we know and understand it has been turned on its head, everything has changed, and nothing — not even death — stands in our way.

Teresa Angle-Young is a pastor who is simply seeking God, loving neighbors, and trying to follow Jesus.

Taken from: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/easter-and-limitless-possibilities>

Franklin First Online Giving

Online giving is a great choice for when you are unable to join us for Worship to continue to support the church. You can either set-up a recurring payment or give each time you visit the site.

Connect by using this link:

<https://franklinfirstumc.org/giving-%26-member-resources>



Easter Prayer

Heavenly Father,
as we celebrate the resurrection of Your
Son, Jesus Christ, we remember
His journey through the Passion.

We recall His triumphant entry into
Jerusalem, the Last Supper, His agony in
Gethsemane, and His crucifixion.
We rejoice in His glorious resurrection.

Risen Lord, fill our hearts with the joy and
hope of Your resurrection.
Empower us to live as Easter people,
sharing Your love and
grace with all we meet.

May we carry the light of
Your resurrection into the world,
proclaiming the good news that
Christ is risen! Alleluia!
In the name of the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, we pray.
Amen.

Districts are Realigning

The Great Miami River District will be saying goodbye to Greene county and 8 eastern Clermont county churches on July 1st with a district realignment. These churches will be welcomed into the Scioto River District family of churches along with churches in Fairfield county on July 1st. Additional moves include Paulding and Putnam counties moving from the Maumee River District to the Western Lakes District and Union and Madison counties moving from Western Lakes to the Olentangy River.



These changes are coming to district lines in order to equalize the number of churches within each district.

Wesley Foundation of Cincinnati is Celebrating 100 Years of Ministry

Executive Director Rev. Becky Schofield Motter, Wesley's Board of Directors, and students are so very grateful to the many churches and individuals who have supported them over the years.

Wesley alums - share your stories and memories! Please post on your socials and include the hashtag #CincyWesley100.



Save these Dates in 2025 to Celebrate 100 years of Ministry

You are cordially invited by our Board of Directors, Student Leaders and Staff!

Where it all started

Saturday, April 5

1-3 pm

At Clifton UMC

3416 Clifton Ave.

Where we have grown

Saturday, June 7

1-3 pm

At our Peace House

650 Riddle Rd.

Homecoming Celebration

Saturday, October 25

3 hours before kick off

At our Clifton Property

2717 Clifton Ave.

Franklin First United Methodist Church

2025 Lay Leadership Ministry

Making disciples... Building Christian community... Transforming lives!



Church Council:

Church Council Chair	Mike Smith
Church Council Secretary	
Lay Leader	Connie Bolinger
Lay Member of Annual Conference	Tami Chamberlain
Lay Member of Annual Conference Alternate	Kim Chewning
Treasurer	Tami Chamberlain
Membership Secretary	Cheryl Cyphers
Financial Secretary	Theresa Fultz
Church Historian	Robert Bowman
Pastor	Laura Saunders

Ministry Team Representatives:

Staff-Parish	Peggy Darragh-Jeromos
Finance	Paul Anderson
Endowment	Paul Anderson
Trustee Chairs	Jim Martin, Mike Runyan
Worship	Monica Rhude
Technology	Joe Chamberlain
Committee on Lay Leadership	Laura Saunders
Christian Education	Mike Smith, Rhonda Roberson
Missions & Outreach	Linda Smith, Karen Anderson
Care Team	Lee Saunders
Hospitality & Events	Carol Runyan
Welcoming Ministry	Dorothy Rayburg
Women's Circle	Monica Rhude
Member At Large	Kaylee Glossip
Member At Large	Amanda Leffew

Staff-Parish Relations Committee:

Chair: Peggy Darragh-Jeromos	Lay Leader: Connie Bolinger
Terms expiring 2025	Cheryl Cyphers, Mishelle Dicken
Terms expiring 2026	Sue Fullen, Peggy Darragh-Jeromos, Pam Trout
Terms expiring 2027:	Sally Fitzgerald, Karen Anderson, Cindy Kuntzman

Trustees: Co-Chairs: Jim Martin, Mike Runyan

Terms expiring 2025:	Cody Chilcutt, Mike Runyan, Connie Bolinger
Terms expiring 2026:	Gary Ogden, Joe Chamberlain, Joe Wright
Terms expiring 2027:	Jan Abell, Jim Martin, Trisha Dicken

Committee on Lay Leadership (Nominations):

Chair: Pastor Laura Saunders	Lay Leader: Connie Bolinger
Terms expiring 2025:	Kathy Martin, Peggy Darragh-Jeromos
Terms expiring 2026:	Sally Fitzgerald, Karen Anderson
Terms expiring 2027:	Barb Ogden, Charlotte Summer, Brian Graves

Finance Committee: (By virtue of office.)

Chair	Paul Anderson
Treasurer:	Tami Chamberlain
Financial Secretary:	Theresa Fultz
Church Council Chair:	Mike Smith
Trustees Co-Chairs:	Jim Martin, Mike Runyan
Staff Parish Chair:	Peggy Darragh-Jeromos
Lay Leader:	Connie Bolinger
Lay Member of Annual Conference:	Tami Chamberlain
Pastor:	Laura Saunders

Permanent Endowment Fund Committee

Chair of Finance Committee	Paul Anderson
Church Treasurer	Tami Chamberlain
Chair of Board of Trustees	Jim Martin, Mike Runyan
Chair of Church Council	Mike Smith
Lay Leader	Connie Bolinger
Member at Large (Term: 2024-25)	TBD
Member at Large (Term: 2025-26)	Jerry Truesdell
Pastor (non-voting member)	Laura Saunders

Worship Ministry Team: Chair: Monica Rhude

Choir Director:	Monica Rhude
Bell Choir Director:	Tami Chamberlain
Altar Design:	Pam Bishop, Shari Tutt, Carol Runyan
Technology:	Joe Chamberlain
Lay Leader:	Connie Bolinger
Pastor:	Laura Saunders

Mission & Outreach Team:

Co-Chairs: Linda Smith, Karen Anderson
Madelyn Lang, Karen Anderson, Tami Chamberlain, Marna Rogers, Sally Fitzgerald,

Technology Team: Chair: Joe Chamberlain

Joe Chamberlain, Trisha Dicken, Andy Kuntzman, Tami Chamberlain, LeeAnn Lee, Paul Anderson, Rick Chamberlain

Christian Education Team:

Co-Chairs: Mike Smith (Adult) Rhonda Roberson (Children)
Jan Truesdell, Rachel Chamberlain, Madelyn Lang, Carol Runyan, Mike Smith, Rhonda Roberson

Care Team: Chair: Lee Saunders

Lee Saunders (phone contact); Charlotte Summer, Dorothy Rayburg, Jan Truesdell, Judy Deskins (visitation team)

Franklin First
United Methodist Church



Pastor
Laura Saunders

Sunday Worship Service
10:45 am
Livestreaming on Facebook

Faith Seekers Bible Study
Sundays, 9:15 am

Upcoming Events

APRIL 13	PALM SUNDAY, 10:45 AM
APRIL 17	MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE, 7 PM
APRIL 18	GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE, 7 PM
APRIL 20	EASTER SUNDAY, 10:45 AM
APRIL 27	CONFIRMATION SUNDAY, 10:45 AM
MAY 11	MOTHER'S DAY SUNDAY, 10:45 AM
MAY 18	MUSIC SUNDAY, 10:45 AM

Franklin First United Methodist Church

303 South Main St.
Franklin, OH 45005

Phone: 937-746-5232
E-mail: office@franklinfirstumc.org

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

