



Todd Ponath, FREEMAN STAFF

Frank and Sandra Gaylord share their lives with each other and with the congregation of First United Methodist Church in Waukesha. The husband and wife are pastors of the church.

Church's pastors are soul mates

Gaylords share lives with congregation, each other

By Lisa Young Stiers
Special to the Freeman

WAUKESHA — Visitors to the First United Methodist Church in Waukesha may be confused when they look at the bulletin and see that both pastors have the same last name. But it's not a typographical error.

Pastors Frank R. and Sandra Foley Gaylord have led the church since 1994, but they have worked together in faith since they were married more than 30 years ago.

"It's not so unusual anymore," Sandra said of the couple's position at the church. "Once upon a time, it was unheard of."

The Gaylords took very different paths to the ministry.

Frank first felt a calling while he was in high school. His goal to become a pastor motivated him to enroll at Lawrence College.

"I think it's probably the only reason I went to college — to prepare for the ministry," he said with a laugh.

He didn't want to enter seminary with heavy debts, so he took education courses in college and became a public school teacher.

After two years he entered Garrett, a seminary at Northwestern Illinois University. He graduated and was ordained in 1963.

Sandra attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison to earn a teaching degree. During her senior year, she became interested in a short-term missionary program offered by the Methodist Church. After graduation, she trained and then served in Pakistan, teaching at a women's college and girls' high school.

"In Pakistan, I had my first call to the ministry," she said.

When she returned, Sandra enrolled at Garrett, where she

met Frank in September 1962. They were married a year later.

She left the seminary and moved to Fort Atkinson with Frank, who became associate pastor at a local church.

The Gaylords went on to serve churches in Green Bay, Platteville, where a third child was born; and then in Madison, where Frank served at a local church for 10 years and then on the church conference for six more.

While in Platteville, Sandra earned her master's degree in guidance and counseling. She later continued her work in education in Madison, first working in a preschool at the church where Frank served and later writing church/school curriculum. Finally, she became Christian education director at another local church.

"That was really when I discovered my true calling," Sandra said. "I wanted to go

back to where I was 20 years ago."

She re-entered seminary at Garrett.

In 1990, Frank became senior pastor at the First United Methodist Church and the family moved to Waukesha. When Sandra graduated and was ordained in 1991, she began serving congregations in North Prairie and Eagle. Finally, in 1994, she joined First United Methodist Church as associate pastor.

The Gaylords biggest challenge is not letting their church conversation take over their personal time. They say being together each day, both at home and work, is much better than the years Frank spent traveling for the conference and the years Sandra spent at seminary.

"Actually, it's easier now that we're working together because we spent a lot of years apart," Frank explained. "It's amazing how separate our work here is."