



The Staples Family

Welcoming a New Season

COVER STORY

By Jenna Caputo

Photos by MarkBolles.com

“To everything there is a season....” Many of us know this phrase well, but for Reverends Greg & Damaris Staples, they know firsthand the joy these “new seasons” can bring to our lives. They have recently taken on positions as co-pastors of Clifton Park Center Baptist Church (CPCBC) and their journey here was filled with divine intervention and a true calling.

Greg grew up in Augusta, Maine. Living in a country setting, he participated in many outdoor activities, including camping in Baxter State Park and sailing on Penobscot Bay. Also enjoying music, Greg was a classical pianist and played trumpet in the school band. He is a

coffee aficionado and at one time managed a high-end coffee shop. He could even discern coffee by different countries of the world. Greg also enjoys solving the Rubix Cube, solving it in about two minutes. He’s hoping to one day learn all the algorithms so he can solve it in under 30 seconds.

Despite these varied talents, Greg decided to major in social sciences in college, with the intention of becoming a professional counselor or an attorney. After college he worked as a paraprofessional with behaviorally impaired middle school kids, and processed case notes in a mental hospital, but he wasn’t sure which direction he wanted to go. Through it all, faith and church had always been a central part of his life. “After graduating from college,

I was looking for what I was going to do next. As doors kept closing on me, I felt more and more frustrated. One day, my pastor reminded me that I had once considered the ministry as a vocation. Following the conversation, I pursued seminary. From that point, the doors of opportunity opened like never before, including the opportunity to meet my wife, Damaris."

Damaris is originally from Barcelona in Catalonia, Spain. Growing up, she also enjoyed the outdoors, as well as gymnastics, hiking, spending time by the Pyrenees Mountains and traveling to France, Switzerland, Austria and Italy with her family in a RV. But she knew from an early age what her calling was. "At the age of 16-17, I felt God calling me to make His love and His message known. It was a call to go to other cultures, a call to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ," she explains.

She ended up going to the European Bible Institute, an international and evangelical school of theology and missions north of Paris, France, to study with people from around the world. After graduating, she knew she needed to prepare herself further for ministry. Knowing that her parents could not afford to send her to graduate school, she applied to various theological seminaries in the USA and England. While waiting, she spent a year in Barcelona as a nanny, but month after month, she kept hearing back from her schools that no scholarships were available.

"I had a very strong conviction that God wanted me to further my studies and to prepare for the ministry that He had for me. It was a frustrating process for a while because I could not see how things were going to come together, and yet, I knew God wanted me to do this. It got to the point where I started to get a bit discouraged so I decided to do what we Christians do when we cannot figure out things or do not know which way to go: pray. I spent an entire night in prayer (literally), asking God to show me

the way, asking God to bring down barriers, to open a huge door for me if this conviction to further my studies in Theology was indeed coming from him. I left it in God's hands." Two days later, she answered a call from her former youth pastor, saying he had just received a call that she had been accepted to Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Center, MA on a full scholarship. "I was speechless," she says. "I knew God had heard my prayers and had answered them in a powerful way."

It was in her third year there that she met Greg in the mailroom where she worked. He kept coming in to say hi and they eventually went for coffee together, becoming friends, then dating. They were engaged on the Pyrenees Mountains in Catalonia and married at the International Community Church in Allston (Boston) on June 24, 2000.

They now have three children – Jessica (13), Nathan (9) and Samuel (2). They enjoy travelling and camping together. Music is still big in their family. Damaris sang with two contemporary worship bands in her college years. Greg continues to play the piano, while Jessica has played the viola and is learning to sing, and Nathan plays the trumpet.

Nathan is an excellent soccer player and Jessica is an accomplished gymnast, winning the New England Regionals last spring. An active family, they are

looking forward to discovering the Adirondacks and the other adventures waiting for them in their new home here in the Capital District.

The Staples previously lived in Melrose, MA for over 16 years, but sensed that God was calling them to a new season of ministry. While they weren't directly applying for a new position, Damaris' profile had been circulating within the American Baptist denomination. The Associate Executive Minister saw her profile and thought she might be a good match for CPCBC. "It was definitely meant to be," says Greg. "All of the pieces came together beautifully.



Once the church realized that I was also an ordained minister, they decided to bring us both on board as co-pastors."

The logistics of the move were a little complicated as Damaris had to finish her duties at her church in Melrose. Greg came here first and there was a little back and forth as they finished their duties and brought the family out, but as Greg says, "Amazingly, the transition has been incredibly smooth. This is another factor that has helped me confirm that this move was meant to be." As with any big change in life, a new move can be daunting, but they are looking forward to discovering the area and learning about their new home. Damaris has a wonderful way of looking at it that rings true for any big change in life: "We need to be flexible with ourselves and flexible with one another as we give each other the space and time to go through this transition. We miss all our friends and family, but we are looking forward to making some new friendships here. It is not about comparing one place to another. It is about welcoming the new season and the new people God brings to our lives. Life becomes so much better when we accept that!"

They are excited to lead their new community and are hoping to expand the church's reach by involving it in more areas of service within the community, enhancing their existing ministries as well as beginning new ministries, building their mission program bigger, and expanding their youth group.

It's obvious these two are passionate about their work, stressing that it is indeed a call and not just a job. They say it's "humbling and exciting" to see where God leads them, to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others and helping others to find their God-given calling, whatever that may be.

As Greg says, "A minister wears many hats. You preach and lead worship. You are also an administrator, a mediator, a teacher, a counselor. In my first month, I have already had the opportunity to review the budget, research investment possibilities for the endowment, provide

pastoral care/counseling, officiate a funeral, mediate discussions, and of course, preach and lead worship. Every day is a little different – every week is a little different. You have to be ready for whatever comes at you."

At the same time, they also live very normal lives, attending school meetings and after school activities and pursuing their outside interests. "Ministers are real people, like anyone else," Damaris explains. "We are not perfect. We make mistakes. We get tired. We need breaks. It is wonderful to get to know so many people in the churches and in the communities we serve. CPCBC is a wonderful group of people who genuinely care about each other and live out Christ's love. Greg and I are committed to preach and teach the word of God in a relevant way to impact this generation for Christ. We are thankful to the people of CPCBC for calling us to co-pastor this church and hope to bring in new ministries for couples, families, and in the areas God will show us, to help us to continue to grow spiritually. As I said in my first sermon at the church, God has brought us here for a season and for a reason. That is how God works!" ■

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com.

SEPTIC & GREASE HAULING • RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL

BUDGET
SEWER & DRAIN

YOU NAME THE PRICE

(518) 785-1475



Creative
Photo & Graphic

Commercial &
Industrial Photography
in the studio or on location

PhotoAndGraphic.com
(518) 490-1757



CROWTHER
CONSTRUCTION

Kitchens, Baths,
Custom Closets,
& Remodeling

518 435-5733
crowtherconstruction.net