

**Saskatchewan woman answers God's call to the Seminary**

9-month internship in Bruce County will present opportunities

by Mary Golem  
for the Sun Times

"Learn To Do By Doing" is the motto of the 4-H youth program. It could also be the motto a Saskatoon Seminary student uses during her nine-month internship placement in the Sullivan-Williamsford Lutheran Parish.

Kristin Soveran, a third year student at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan will spend until next May living and working in the two-point parish of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Sullivan and St. James' Lutheran Church in Williamsford.

An internship is regarded by the Seminary as a contextual ministry in which a body of skills are developed: pastoral identity, character formation, spiritual formation, effective preaching, interactive teaching, witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, serving in love and finding balance between service and self-care. It is meant to be a creative and constructive learning experience during which time the student's own gifts and talents are utilized so that the student grows in self-awareness, ministry competence and theological understanding.

Opportunities are presented which allow the student to relate personally and pastorally with people and to reflect theologically on those relationships. During her internship, Soveran will be working with, and alongside, her pastoral supervisor, Pastor Sheilah Fletch, and the congregants.

Soveran will be doing everything from teaching Bible studies and leading worship services to preaching, visiting sick and shut-ins in their homes, hospitals and nursing homes and participating in community and outreach ministry activities. During her internship, Soveran will be living in the stone parsonage beside St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

Living in a rural community isn't new for Soveran. Born in Saskatchewan, she grew up on a farm but has spent most of her working and married life in Regina.

Trained as a psychiatric nurse, she has worked as a therapist in a mental health clinic in Fort McMurray, as co-ordinator of an inter-community group and as a stay-at-home mother and babysitter.

Soveran describes her faith journey as "a loving, gradual and slow process", that developed over a period of years as she served others in the church, including helping with both regular and contemporary worship services, being involved in youth ministry, on church council and in a chapter of the Order of St. Luke healing ministry.

"I came to faith in mid-life," she said, "and how the Holy Spirit has worked in my life has profoundly changed me. It has brought out the very best in me."

At first "overwhelmed" when one of the pastors of her home congregation in Regina suggested she consider attending seminary, Soveran admitted she still considered herself "a baby in faith and I did what I could to ignore the suggestion."

However, while attending a silent retreat in Saskatoon about a year later, "the nudging from God" kept getting stronger and what at first seemed like "impossible thinking", would later become a reality when Soveran made the decision to attend Seminary.

Raised in a peripheral, non-active church family, Soveran admits she used to challenge other people about their faith. Her son's desire to attend church following a summer camp experience eventually led Soveran to attending church regularly "and because of that, and the people around me who loved me into faith by living out their own faith", Soveran's faith developed, as did her relationship with Jesus Christ.

Although middle-aged and at a point in life when many consider taking life easier, Soveran entered Seminary in Saskatoon three years ago. As part of their studies, each student is required to do an internship placement.

"I had not expected to come east for my internship," Soveran said, admitting her greatest fear was being so far away from her home and family, including husband Doug, a chemical engineer; son Rhett and his wife, Leah in Calgary and daughter, Emily in Regina. "My greatest learning opportunity because of that will be learning to be utterly dependent on God."

"This is my way of living out, and responding to, the love of God I've experienced in my life. It's a way for me to give back and serve our church, especially when there is such a need for pastors."

Realizing for her first ministry call she will likely be placed in a rural parish, Soveran is grateful for the rural ministry experience she will gain during her internship and is looking forward to the experience "of empowering people to live out their Christian faith, as I myself grow in my own faith journey."