

In a world of diversity, contention, fracturing belief systems and fraying connections I believe we live in both confusion and certainty. I am certain that God's love transforms me. I am confused that this good news is at times received as worst case scenario by the world. I am certain that the gift of a St. Olaf education is a building block of my life. I am confused when I attempt to bring all those memories to my mind's eye, because I have changed so incredibly in the years since 1965. I am certain that life is astonishing in its opportunities. I am confused when change feels so difficult in the midst of my 60s. I am certain that I know the truth and I am confused when the truth proves I did not know what I thought I knew!

Not long ago in a Lenten meditation the speaker asked those of us gathered what shape stop signs were and of course we all knew. Then the question came: what color are yield signs? Many of us with great certainty replied "yellow!" He pointed out (though a cacophony of mental argument ensued and some of us actually waited to confirm until we headed out to the local streets!) that yield signs have been white and red for nearly 20 years. I may not know the truth even when I am certain that I have it in my grasp.

As a pastor and an Ole I have become more and more convinced that what I thought I knew I may not. Scripture reminds me that God's thoughts are not my thoughts and God's ways not my ways, as it is written in Isaiah 55: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." There is the wonder of transformation! God's incredible grace both saves me from myself, and sends me into the world to transform others. Oft-times I wonder how to do it and feel confused, but I am certain of that amazing grace.