

## Jake McArthur is Opening to the Mystery at Westminster church next Wednesday

Written By Constance Scrafield

Multi-faceted, a person of many talents, Jake McArthur is bringing his book, *Opening to the Mystery*, to Orangeville's Westminster United Church, next Wednesday, June 12 at 7:00 pm.

He will be there to present the story of his own life's journey through the major crisis of his life.

Imagine that, 20 years ago, your darling 23-year-old daughter was going to party with friends. They had very wisely organized taxis to take them from the party venue to their hotel, where they could dream the night away in safety.

Then, for no reason that you'll ever know, having returned to the safe haven of the hotel, she and a young man took off from there in her car and, missing a tight turn on the road, died of the adventure.

You will never get over it. So, how do you spend the rest of your life dealing with it? For Jake McArthur, whose story this is, of the death of his own daughter, Erica, there are no answers but there are many strange experiences that lead him on a path, skirting the spiritual borders between life as we know it and what is possibly beyond that.

After such a time, he has put together this slim volume, recounting his stories of nearly, but not entirely, convincing him of what is the after life. In this, he engages readers to travel with him and come either to their own conclusions or form their own questions.

"The course of my life completely changed," he said quite simply.

Mr. McArthur and his wife, Roz, loving step mother to Erica and his son, Colin, were living in the countryside, in Caledon, at the time and for many years, He had already concluded that there was much more to the world of nature than what is seen, that there is a life force, something of the spirit, which, while acknowledging it, he did not name it.

In those years, he was a successful business executive, a practical person, not given to flights of fantasy.

Somewhat against the grain of his early ambitions, wanting to be a playwright and majoring in English at University to take him there, he told us, during a recent interview, "I was the eldest of five children, the first to graduate and my dad had different ambitions for me. He helped me get a job at a bank, in a branch located at Spadina and Dundas."

Soon enough, he went back to school to enter academia. He wrote a play "which Gaslight took on and, as I was watching my own play in rehearsal and the actors on the stage speaking my words, it was a revelation for me."

He backed off: "I know my grief and I have invited people to participate in Death Cafe, to come for an evening with no agenda, to talk about whatever is on their minds. There are three conditions: no selling, no "truth" and strict confidentiality."

By "no truth," he means that no person will insist they know the answers to matters of the spirit world; that they can say definitely what happened to them but not to insist of that being proof.

He has dabbled, more than dabbled.

While Erica was still alive, she left her husband and came home to him and Roz to live. As he was by then, retired from business, he and she had time to explore the possibilities of possibly learning more than one normally does of what lies beyond. They took trips and met a variety of folk, all with different experiences to offer, each leaving them with small enlightenment and other questions.

Some time after the accident, wanting to get away, to do something meaningful, a friend counselled him to read the works of Matthew Fox, professor at a university in California. By coincidence, after Mr. McArthur had read and been impressed by Matthew Fox's writings, the author himself came to Toronto to do a workshop, which Jake McArthur attended and, then, was on his way.

He went to California, to the university where Matthew Fox was a member of the faculty, to study and receive his Doctor of Ministry. This was an institution ?not creating ministers but creating people centred, so they could do a fuller job of whatever their ministry was.?

He subsequently stayed for the maximum allowed six days at St. Benoit monastery in Quebec, where there is a strict regime of silence and where, briefly, he wondered if he was meant to be a monk....

?After that,? said he, looking back, ?I grieved for a lot of my life choices ? so many years in business, albeit, rather successful, but my heart was never in it ? all those years.?

The story-telling Mr. McArthur will treat his audience to on June 12, is about his walk on the search for himself and his daughter, Erica, while she was alive and with him and since her death, when he still feels her with him. They are a collection of fascinating tales and Mr.Mcarthur's presence on stage is delightful.

For tickets, call the Church office at 519-941-0381.