

## ***Bring Your Own God to Church***

**By Wayne Parker**

The other evening while wandering around in my mind, out jumped a feel good thought from way back in my life.

As teenager of 14 or so, I used to tape songs off the radio onto my own reel to reel tape deck. Now understand that this was not an expensive tape recorder but it worked for me. I would slide the microphone near the radio, waited for a song to be played and hit the record button. I had reels and reels of hits that I could listen to at any time.

On day while having my finger in the ready position, I heard the announcer say that what he was about to play was the longest song at that time on the radio. He introduced the song and I hit record. Well it was long considering the two or three minute songs of the day as this one stood more than 18 minutes in length.

I will give you the answer, do not worry. It was [Arlo Guthrie](#), Alice's Restaurant. Within days, I knew every word of that song singing word for word as I played it back from the recorder.

***For those that do not know, Arlo is the son of famed folksinger, Woody Guthrie. Need I say more about the musical jeans.***

So back to my story, I was bouncing through thoughts and Arlo jumped out into my brain. A smiled crossed my face that lit me right up. I am not sure whether it was the feel good memory coming back to me or whether it was for the man who spoke what he felt way back when that felt so good to me. Either way it does not matter but it sent me on a mission to see what this peace loving, family man, counter culture hero and world renowned folk singer was up too.



First stop was his website. I could not believe my eyes.....as of writing this note, this week, Arlo Guthrie is playing some 40 miles away from me. Now how is that for a Law of Attraction Story \*LOL\*. From there onto You Tube to view what was there.

Lo and behold there are hundreds of videos of him in performances by himself, with his group and or with other great people such as Pete Seeger and so on.

Arlo loves to get his message out to the world through his songs and on many occasions during his songs. So I first chose Alice's Restaurant performed sometime in the past few years. That same smile was once again plastered all over my face. Some 18 minutes later I was selecting another.

I picked Amazing Grace then I saw it was 13 plus minutes in length. No way this song is that long, so I knew Arlo had to have something say to the people. So click I went and the words he spoke in the middle of the song just blew me away.

## ***Years ago, that song Alice's Restaurant was a real place and the story was made into a movie.***

Just recently, well 1991, the church mentioned in the song was bought by Arlo and now has brought some of his stuff full circle.

The church Named for his parents, [The Guthrie Center](#) is a not-for-profit interfaith church foundation dedicated to providing a wide range of local and international services. Its outreach programs include everything from providing HIV/AIDS services to baking cookies with a local service organization; an HD walk-a-thon to raise awareness and money for a cure for Huntington's Disease, and offering a place simply to meditate. The Guthrie Foundation is a separate not-for-profit educational organization that addresses issues such as the environment, health care, cultural preservation and educational exchange.

One day after purchasing the old church, Arlo was mopping up and a knock came to the door. It was a preacher from the nearby town. After inviting the preacher in, the man asked Arlo what he was doing? Arlo responded with, mopping the floor. \*Laughter goes here\* No the preacher said, what are you doing here? What are you going to call your church?

Arlo thought about it for a few seconds and told the preacher that he is calling it, Bring Your Own God to Church. WOW, what a concept! Well not really because this Woodstock veteran and highly respected folk singer has been bringing his words and views to all of us for decades now, the exact same way his father did.



He went on to say that it does not matter whether it is a mosque, a church or temple or synagogue, we all bring in what feels good into us and that is what matters.

In another video clip he was playing and his whole family was singing along with him on stage as they do at most concerts. His commentary in the middle of this song was about the love and good relations he has with his family, grandkids etc.

He went on to say that the whole world is just a big family so why not share the love among us all to help make this world a better place for everyone. You go Arlo, just keep sharing your voice one concert, one person at a time.

The man has not changed in some 6 decades of music and I do not ever expect that Arlo Guthrie will do so anytime soon. Arlo, you will always be the master that orchestrated some real great feel good stuff into me. I thank you for being who you are.

Peace and Love  
Wayne