Sara’s comments on the first draft:

FOCUS

Remember that this package is about people on a spiritual journey. Although the Honduras project and Allie’s environmental awareness are going to be major parts of this story, we still need to know about her background, history and how she came to this faith. If her religious transformation is that she felt she needed to DO something instead of just BELIEVE something, that’s great, that should be the focus of your story.

We need to get to know Allie as a person more. What’s she like? Show her in action.

DATA

Need data here! Something on Unitarians would be helpful, because it is an unusual liberal religion without a specific creed. But also on the angles you’re using - social justice work by churches and environmental causes in connection with religions. Don’t just give me links - use the data. Where is your Pew data?

SOURCES

Need more sources - Her friends, family - is she married? Kids? Parents, other people who’ve seen her on her spiritual journey?

**Reporter byline**: Claire Cole

**Reporter contact info**: 608-712-4827; [clairec1824@gmail.com](mailto:clairec1824@gmail.com); [caczp4@mai.missouri.edu](mailto:caczp4@mai.missouri.edu)

**Assigned word count: 500-600 vs. ACW**: About 370 words - really short right now - that’s OK because you’ll be adding things, but I’d like more here!

**Print Hed & Dek (give at least 3): Print Dek**:

Spirituality to sustain -- Allie Gassmann finds meaning in living green

Activism for a better world -- Allie Gassmann works with UU to bring change

Bigger than self -- Allie Gassmann appreciates the opportunity to help others

**Web Hed & Dek (give 1)**:

**Story Links:** (at least 3 that could be embedded into story on website)

<http://www.uuchurch.net/honduras_news.htm>

<http://www.uuchurch.net/minister.htm>

<https://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&q=honduras&ie=UTF-8&ei=2hpJUaXcMYT1qAHuxIDoDg&ved=0CAgQ_AUoAg>

**Suggested Tweet**: A local church is taking social activism to a new level. Ever hear of a canasta?

**Suggested Facebook post**: A small Honduran village is working on a huge project with the help of a local Columbian and the UU Church. We’ve got the story.

**Suggested Web Excerpt**: Allie Gassmann and the UU church don’t subscribe to a creed; they subscribe to social activism.

**Two versions of a lede**:

Remember that this package is about people on a spiritual journey. Although the Honduras project and Allie’s environmental awareness is going to be a major part of this story, we still need to know about her background, history and how she came to this faith. If her religious transformation is that she felt she needed to DO something instead of just BELIEVE something, that’s great, that should be the focus of your story.

1.) As a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Columbia, Allie Gassmann doesn’t subscribe to a specific creed. Her beliefs are all her own.

2.) Allie Gassmann is finding meaning in her life with a religion without a specific creed.

**Body of the story**:

Created in 1961 with the merger of these two beliefs, Unitarian Universalism does not require its members to believe in a certain set of values or ideas.

[good place for comments from Rev. Molly]

Although not a very large denomination, UUs are large proponents of reform and social activism. Throughout history, they’ve championed numerous liberal causes, such as freedom for slaves, civil rights, and better working conditions for women.

Allie Gassmann, local Columbian, was drawn to this societal awareness as soon as she came to the UU in 2000. Need lots more on her personal journey, where she came from, her religious and spiritual values.

What about the environmental aspect you mentioned?

“The UU churches have really offered me lots of ways to get involved and do something beyond my own selfish needs,” says Gassmann.

While being involved in many different aspects and projects within the church, Gassmann is most concerned with a project far, far away from Columbia.

Since 2008, she has put together multiple trips to a rural village in Honduras to help the locals build latrines. The two trips were very successful and the Hondurans were extremely grateful. Which village? Give specific details about the trip.

That wasn’t quite enough to Gassmann, though.

As Gassmann got to know these people, she found out that the village had a very unique problem. Their community is situated very close to a big river, with the more urban area on the opposite side.

Also on the other side: the schools that the children attend.

For three months every year, the river becomes too high to cross. There is a bridge, but it’s quite a ways away from the village. Therefore, the kids don’t go to school for those three months.

“They said they’ve been asking for years for what’s called a ‘canasta,’” says Gassman.

A spanish word meaning basket, a canasta is basically a “hand-powered zipline” that would allow four people to cross the river safely at a time.

After hearing this, Gassmann knew she wanted to help. She got a committee together and the church began raising funds. They recently reached the necessary amount and are planning another trip to Honduras in 2014 to install the canasta. How much will this cost? How many people are involved?

“This is the sort of thing I’ve always wanted to do,” says Gassmann.

**Sidebar or Info Box if needed**: None

**Sources**: Make sure you include their Facebook pages, Twitter handles, websites etc. in addition to phone and email. Include when, where and how you interviewed the person. (By phone, email, in person; at the office, home, etc.)

Allie Gassmann

Member of UU church

[alliegassmann@socket.net](mailto:alliegassmann@socket.net)

573-356-1210

Had first interview on 3/8 in person at Kaldi’s coffee. Second interview scheduled for 3/24, again at Kaldi’s.

Reverand Molly Housh Gordon

Minister at Unitarian Universalist Church in Columbia

[minister@uuchurch.net](mailto:minister@uuchurch.net)

573-442-5764

First interview scheduled for 3/25 at her office.

Two members of the church’s Social Action Committee

\*Getting contact info from Rev. Molly at interview

Need more sources! Her friends, family - is she married? Kids? Parents, other people who’ve seen her on her spiritual journey?

**Documents as Sources**: (links or copies of data, reports, records; must include statistical support for your story) I can’t tell what these things link to. Give descriptions. We also need to not just list links, but actually USE the data you find.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.mul.missouri.edu/stable/1387908?seq=1>

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.mul.missouri.edu/doi/10.1046/j.1523-1739.2002.01669.x/full>

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1387908?seq=1&>

**Media Support**: (news articles on your general topic)

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/10/01/unitarian-faith-growing-stronger-nationwide/1607243/>

<http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2006-02-03/community/0602030264_1_unitarian-universalist-association-traditions-religious-congregations>

<http://cronkitenewsonline.com/2012/03/tucson-churches-join-movement-linking-religion-sustainability/>

<http://wamu.org/news/11/08/05/religious_leaders_seek_to_boost_faith_in_sustainability.php>