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## WITT FAMILY WORKS TO STRENGTHEN EASTER TRADITIONS

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By Amanda Helt

Photo by Johnathan Swayne



There are a wide variety of Easter traditions celebrated by Northwest University students and faculty from egg hunts to Lent and Holy Week. Professors Jacob and Autumn Witt, Ph.D., question if we, as a charismatic denomination, demonstrate the appropriate reverence for Easter Sunday.

"We definitely believe Easter is under celebrated in our society and in the church," Jacob said.

Jacob comes from a Presbyterian background and the Witts recently started attending an Assemblies of God church.

"Coming back to the Charismatic tradition here at NU, we notice also there is a buildup [to Easter] but not the same liturgical build up you get at Presbyterian churches," Jacob said. "Those are certainly elements that we miss."

Jacob said he has seen many students shifting to liturgical traditions such as Anglican or Presbyterian churches because of their desire for tradition and structure. He said these denominations provide guidance about how to celebrate based on the church calendar and how Christian faith connects deeply with these holidays.

"We noticed that it was easy to build traditions around Christmas because church and society favor that," Jacob said. "Having long advent stories, building a manger together, all kinds of projects that you can do as a family, and traditions like a yule log or an advent candle...And so we wanted that same kind of other end of the Christian calendar for our kids as well."

The Witts have three kids – Elliot who is the oldest, and two younger daughters named Caroline and Maggie. This year on Easter the Witts will introduce a new tradition for their family to help grow and integrate them more with their faith. Their family traditions, according to Jacob, have been a work in progress.

They practiced observing Lent and did a family Easter egg hunt along with Easter Sunday services. They also started letting their children tell the Easter story in segments on Sundays.

The Witts said they will still keep the candy that Easter has become known for, but this year they will also be introducing gifts on Easter.

"I think the reasons why Christmas is so easily celebrated is because of gifts," Jacob said.

Along with Easter egg hunts and chocolate bunnies there are several other ways to celebrate Easter as it is one of the most prominent days in Christianity across all denominations.

*In the original version of this story posted April 3rd, there were two cases of misattribution for which The Talon apologizes. According to Professor Jacob Witt, Professor Autumn Witt, Ph.D., was not interviewed for the story. She was mistakenly attributed in the seventh and 10th paragraphs.*

