

Rev. Alex Gee, Michael Johnson react to Robinson decision



14 HOURS AGO • BY [JASON JOYCE | THE CAPITAL TIMES](#) |

Rev. Alex Gee of Madison's Fountain of Life Church and Pastor Harold Rayford of Sun Prairie's Faith, Hope & Love Family Church stood shoulder-to-shoulder on a Williamson Street sidewalk Tuesday afternoon watching live video of [Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne's press conference](#) on a cell phone.

They were joined by a few dozen others; mostly faith and community leaders and several reporters, divided up in small groups watching the news play out on their own phones.

When Ozanne reached the moment in his press conference where he announced there would be no criminal charges against Madison police officer Matt Kenny in the shooting death of Tony Robinson in an apartment located just a few feet away on Williamson, Gee removed his glasses, turned and

walked a few feet up a driveway, away from the group, trying to make sense of what he had just heard.

"I'm still trying to collect my thoughts because I'm numb," Gee said later when asked what was on his mind. "I mean, I don't expect the D.A. to do anything but his job, so I think that part's expected. I just feel a sense of being deflated. I just feel like if something like this would go down in Madison, we'd address it differently. There just seem to be so many unanswered questions."

Gee was part of a [contingent of faith leaders](#) who arrived on Williamson Street Tuesday afternoon, many wearing vestments and yellow "community leader" credentials, with the goal of observing any protests that arose following Ozanne's decision and facilitating calm while assisting the demonstrations.

But for nearly an hour, the group mostly huddled on the sidewalk, processing the news and speaking to the media. A few faith leaders — a rabbi, Madison Urban Ministry's Linda Ketcham, Rev. Chris Long — led others in prayer and song before ultimately leading a march into downtown.

Gee, who has spent time in the last year [speaking to high school students from around the city](#) about [Madison's well chronicled racial disparities](#), quickly thought of them.

“I feel for our young people watching this,” Gee said. “They don’t get the legalese. I’m sure there are legal reasons that Ozanne drew upon. But for kids watching this who don’t get the law, this just seems like if you’re frightened by people, you can shoot them and what do we do to allay those fears? When do we walk away? When do we do what we ask kids to do? Walk away, call for backup. It’s not even just whether (Kenny) was guilty, but how could this have been avoided?”

Farther down Williamson, where cameras gathered to capture a press conference for Robinson’s family, Michael Johnson, CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County, and Anthony Cooper Sr., director of reentry services at the Nehemiah Center, were also strategizing about the afternoon and days ahead.

“I’m concerned about our community,” Cooper said. “We already know that there are a lot of things that have changed in our community, but we need to make sure we address it appropriately.”

Johnson returned to leadership, a theme he raises regularly in front of groups and on social media.

“Leadership is happening right now,” he said, indicating the sidewalks. “You see pastors out here, you see nonprofit leaders, and we just want to make sure there’s peaceful protest and collective leadership. I’m optimistic our city is going to respond accordingly. So far, we have and we’ll have volunteers out here making sure people aren’t agitating things.”

Get the Cap Times app for your smartphone

[Click here](#) for the iPhone version

[Click here](#) for the Android version

Get news delivered to your inbox.

- Cap Times Headlines** Sent each morning at 6
- Cap Times Opinion** Sent each morning at 11
- Cap Times Recap** "In Case You Missed It" Sent each afternoon at 5
- Madison.com Features** Sent each morning at 6
- Madison.com Food & Drink** Sent each Thursday morning at 11