

Mourners say their goodbyes - Teary-eyed family, friends and strangers pay respects to slain young mom and kids

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DETROIT -- Alice Jordan didn't know Lynette Lawson or her two **young** children. But like other strangers, she was moved to attend their visitation Wednesday because of the horrific nature of their deaths.

The Southfield woman was one of hundreds who showed up at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church on the city's northeast side to mourn Lawson, 28; Alexis Eppinger, 9; and Terrance Eppinger, 6.

The three were shot to death Oct. 18 as they slept at the home of her boyfriend, Jason L. Davis, 34, who was also killed in the attack in the 3000 block of Clairmont. Like others at the visitation, Jordan was visibly stunned and shocked by the brutality.

"You can hardly believe it," said Jordan, shaking her head in disbelief as she left the church Wednesday with her 16-year-old son, Philip. "I've never seen anything like it. It's so unreal."

"The worst part of it is the children. How do we protect the kids?"

About 300 mourners strolled through the doors to bid goodbye to people some never knew. Huge floral arrangements fashioned into large hearts and crosses flanked the three white caskets of Lawson and her children.

An organist played a medley of hymns as mourners walked past the open caskets and looked down painfully at Lawson and her son and daughter, all clad in white.

In hushed tones, some of the church elders spoke of the violence that took the lives of the **young** mother and her children and the incessant murder rate that is claiming the lives of **young** children in the city of Detroit.

Michele Morrison of Detroit, also a stranger to the family, came to Wednesday's service to pay respects to the **young** family.

"It's terrible," said Morrison as she left Wednesday's service. "It's sad."

Many in the church left wiping away tears, shaking their heads and wondering what kind of person could murder a **young** mother and the children as they slept.

"It's hurting. It's very hurting," said Donald Walker of Detroit, who identified himself as a longtime family friend. "This is crazy."

Patrick Albert Young Smith, a 31-year-old Detroiter, has been charged in the slayings. He was arraigned Friday on four counts of felony murder and four counts of first-degree murder in the

deaths of Davis, Lawson and the two children. He also was charged with using a firearm to commit a felony, a separate offense.

Smith 's preliminary examination is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Tuesday in 36th District Court in Detroit. He is being held in the Wayne County Jail with no bond. If convicted, **Smith** could spend the rest of his life in prison.

Upcoming services

¥ The funeral for Lynette Lawson, 9-year-old Alexis Eppinger and 6-year-old Terrance Eppinger will be 11 a.m. today at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, 13651 Dequindre in Detroit.

¥ Visitation for Jason L. Davis will be from 2-7 p.m. Tuesday at Andrews Funeral Home, 12809 Rosa Parks Blvd. near Glendale in Detroit.

¥ Davis' funeral will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Tried Stone Baptist Church, 1550 Taylor in Detroit.

Caption: Alexis Lawson Terrance Family members grieve at the visitation. "It's very hurting," says Donald Walker, a family friend. Mourners bid farewell to Lynette Lawson, 28, and her children, Alexis Eppinger, 9, and Terrance Eppinger, 6, on Wednesday at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Detroit. About 300 attended the visitation. Many who came to pay their respects left the church wiping away tears, visibly shaken by the brutal slayings. Church elders spoke regretfully of the urban violence that is claiming **young** lives.

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