

# Leduc high school community in shock after fatal stabbing

The Christ the King school community in Leduc still reeling a day after one of its students died following a stabbing incident and another was charged with first-degree murder.

“It’s all pretty fresh at this point, but everyone rallying around each other, wrapping around each other in support and in prayer,” said Charlie Bouchard, superintendent of the St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic School Division.

RCMP have charged 19-year-old Dylan Thomas Pountney with first-degree murder in the stabbing death of Jennifer Winkler, 17, a student in Grade 11. Both attended Christ the King school. They knew each other and they were in the same classroom when the incident occurred.



Jennifer Winkler

Winkler’s older sister Tracy has established a Go Fund Me page. Supporters have raised more than \$24,000, well above the \$15,000 target for the family’s funeral costs.

RCMP responded to a 911 call from the school at 9:58 a.m. on March 15. Police say the attack occurred in one of the classrooms of the Grade-9-to-12 high school. Christ the King school was immediately locked down and STARS Air Ambulance arrived on scene and transported Winkler to the University of Alberta Hospital, but she succumbed to her injuries.

Pountney was arrested in a nearby residential area at 12:20 p.m. and taken into

police custody.

Classes are expected to resume on March 17, a day after classes were cancelled, with a trauma support team in place for students and staff until the end of the week.

“People are still coming to terms with what happened. I have never experienced an incident this violent and I hope it never happens again,” said Bouchard, an educator for the past 30 years.

Bouchard declined to speculate as to a motive for the attack.

Sam Newman, a Grade 9 student at Christ the King school, recalled she and her friends were in class on a break when the school went into lockdown. They thought it was just a drill and didn’t know exactly what was happening at the time.

“After everything I had learned from my classmates, I felt like I was on the verge of a panic attack. It was genuinely terrifying. I just felt so scared. I wanted the girl to be safe.”



**Rev. Silvichan Dominic**

Rev. Silvichan Dominic, the pastor of St. Michael’s church in Leduc, was at the school for a prayer service with 50 teachers, administration and school division staff in the Christ the King school gym.

“It’s shocking news. It’s terrible news. It’s something that should never happen. You could see that everyone is affected by this,” said Father Dominic, adding he offered prayers for the family, the school and community.

Father Dominic chose to lead the group on site in the Serenity Prayer – which says in part, “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change” – as well as the Prayer of St. Francis which asks for peace and the ability to sow love where there’s hatred.

“We can’t address negativity with negativity even when there have been terrible things that have occurred,” Father Dominic said. “Jesus is love. I told them to ‘Let go and let God.’”

Bouchard said the STAR Catholic school division is also discerning how it can support the Winkler family, including Jennifer’s younger brother, who is a student at a different school.

“This is a true tragedy. It is incomprehensible that an act such as this could happen here in our close-knit community of Leduc,” RCMP Insp. Dale Kendall, commander of the Leduc detachment, told reporters.

“This life-altering for the family of the deceased, the youth and staff at Christ the King, and for our entire community.”



RCMP remained on scene March 16 at Christ the King school in Leduc. Lincoln Ho, Grandin Media

In a statement, school board chair Michelle Lamer said STAR Catholic trustees wished to express their “deepest condolences to the family of the victim, the students and staff of Chris the King School, and everyone impacted by today’s tragedy. As one connected faith community, we ask that God grant strength to

all those who are suffering, and pray they find solace and healing through Christ.”

Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith wrote on Twitter: “I am stunned and heartbroken to learn of the fatal incident at Christ the King school. My prayers, together with (the Archdiocese) go out to the family, friends, faculty and community impacted by this senseless tragedy. May God grant strength (and) healing to all.”

In a statement, Education Minister Adriana LaGrange said she was “heartbroken to hear of the tragic loss of one of our high school students”, adding students can access the school division’s support services as well as the provincial mental health helpline.