

METRO

Fenwick principal survives stabbing

Community is stunned by attack

By Sue Kiesewetter

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MIDDLETOWN -- Police are investigating Friday's early morning stabbing of Bishop Fenwick High School Principal Father Charles "Chuck" Mentrup, apparently at his home.

Middletown Police Maj. Mike Bruck said police were called to Father Mentrup's Carol Lee Lane home about 7:30 a.m. by a friend whom the Roman Catholic priest had called for assistance. He was taken to the hospital where he underwent surgery for his injuries and was listed in fair condition.

"He suffered a stab wound to his abdomen," Maj. Bruck said. "We believe the incident occurred at his home. We think he's going to be OK. We spoke to him briefly."

Maj. Bruck said police are following several leads but do not suspect any students were involved in the stabbing. Father Mentrup, 41, is ending his third year as principal at the school.

In Middletown, news traveled quickly even though Friday was an off-day for stu-

dents, many of whom were preparing for tonight's prom.

"Everybody likes him," said Fenwick junior Beth Kleingers. "He comes to all the football and basketball games and roots everybody on. He feels more like a friend than an authority figure."

Beth's mother, Mary Jean Kleingers, said she, too, was saddened.

"We're pretty shocked," Mrs. Kleingers said. "We love him. He's wonderful. I can't imagine anyone doing that to him. He's so well-liked."

Sister Jean Sora, Holy Family Parish's music minister and organist, said Father Mentrup has been a positive influence on the students and is well-loved in the community.

"It's so hard to understand," Sister Sora said. "I guess nobody is exempt (from violence)."

The attack on Father Mentrup came one day before Fenwick's prom, which will go on as scheduled, said Dan Andriacco, communications director for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. An announcement on Father Mentrup's condition will be given at the prom.

"We're shocked and unsettled by the attack," Mr.