

Memorandum of Concern

To: Andria Bufka, Lee Cory, **Tim Cypher**, Ross Satterwhite, Steve Scales, Sam Simpson, and Skip Telgard for the Leland Township Planning Commission

From: Leland Small Business Owners

Subject: Opposition to Special Use Permit at 110 North Lake Street

Date: November 28, 2025

We are writing to respectfully oppose the pending Special Use Permit for 110 North Lake Street in Leland's Village Commercial District. We are aware of, and support, numerous citizen letters that express a deep commitment to preserving Leland's C-1 district as a retail area—with pedestrian-oriented continuity and irreplaceable small-town character. We are also aware of, and support, those citizen letters that state the fact that Youth for Christ is an international organization, not a "club." Such letters include, but are not limited to, Bart Skorupa's white paper entitled "Youth for Christ as a Chain-Scale Operator: Risks for Leland." As recently as November 2nd, Leelanau Lighthouse Youth for Christ leaders publicly stated that their group is a "parachurch," a religious institution. At the November 5th Planning Commission meeting Leland Township Commissioners referred to Section 7.3.8 of Leland Township's Master Plan. As you know, Section 7.3.8 is dedicated to "Community Institutions (Public facilities, *churches*)." In the supplemental materials the applicant provided to the Township following that meeting, the legal team at Youth for Christ wrote "Bluewater Thumb YFC is a member *church* in good standing of the Association of Youth For Christ *Churches*" (emphasis supplied). We agree with local leadership, national leadership, and Township Commissioners: Leelanau Lighthouse Youth for Christ is, indeed, a church, a parachurch, and/or a religious institution. The Leland Township Zoning Ordinance has dedicated standards for religious institutions, Section 16.11, and the standards expected of religious institutions are not met with their requested use of 110 North Lake Street. The undersigned members of the business community in Leland share the concern that allowing this zoning interpretation would create a precedent-setting, detrimental effect on commerce revenue, now and in the future. The harmful and lasting effects of such a choice include, but are not limited to: straining already-untenable parking during a busy season that continues to expand; reducing job opportunity; limiting tax revenue; and discouraging pedestrian patronage in a C-1 zone that is incredibly small, and fixed, in its footprint. **Leelanau County teens absolutely have a right to both gather and worship; but we respectfully request that the Planning Commission deny this group's current application and encourage them to instead identify an alternative location that is fit for a religious institution.** Please do not hesitate to reach us should you wish to discuss.

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Opposition, continued.

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