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September 25, 2012
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Olde Main at Simpson House Designated as a United Methodist Historic Landmark Honor bestowed Friday, September 14, 2012

History was made again at 2101 Belmont Avenue! For the first time in its history, the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church selected a retirement community to be designated a United Methodist Historic Landmark. In conferring the designation the Rev. Dr. Robert J. Williams General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History acclaimed, "The Olde Main Building at Simpson House has served faithfully for more than a century. If the walls could talk we could learn so much from the people who have lived and served here. It is only fitting and timely that the distinguished history and ministry of Olde Main be designated a Historic Landmark."

The building which was constructed between 1898 and 1899 is itself historic, but also represents a history that can be dated to an earlier era. The roots of the Simpson House ministry are traced back to the year 1865 and the end of the Civil War. The ladies of Philadelphia were noted for giving care to the sick and wounded from the battlefields. With the return of peace, these energies could be channeled into other directions.

Mrs. Jane Henry, the widow of the Reverend John Henry of the Philadelphia Conference, focused the attention of the ladies upon the needs of older Methodists in the City of Philadelphia. Jane Henry was mindful of the needs of some of the older persons in area congregations. It was that concern which created her vision of a home for older people within the Philadelphia Conference. When she approached Bishop and Mrs. Matthew Simpson to share her vision, she selected two eminently qualified listeners. It was through the help of Bishop and Mrs. Simpson, Mrs. Henry was able to interest many in her dream. The Ladies' Christian Commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Philadelphia had worked diligently to meet needs created by the Civil War. On June 14, 1865, through the efforts of Jane Henry, the Simpsons and others, a special meeting was convened. At that meeting, the Ladies' Christian Commission came to an end, and a new organization was created and named: The Ladies' United Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Philadelphia for the benefit of AGED AND INFIRM Members. This society became the founding mothers of Simpson House.

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In accepting the designation on behalf of Simpson Senior Services, Mr. Kim W. Williams, President and CEO acknowledged the efforts of The Rev. David R. Adam, Director of Church Relations in seeking and receiving the United Methodist Historic Landmark designation. Williams emphasized, "This is a very important occasion. The designation of Olde Main as a United Methodist Historic Landmark honors not our work; but the work of women and men who heard a distinct call to action in 1865. We are honored today to celebrate the recognition of their extraordinary vision and impact. Thank you for this honor and for this ceremony to commemorate Olde Main."

Photo Caption (Photo attached) left to right: The Rev. Dr. Robert J. Williams, Gen. Secy. of the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History; The Rev. David Adam, Director of Church Relations, Simpson Senior Services; Roseann M. Smith, Simpson House Executive Director; Kim W. Williams, Simpson Senior Services President and CEO; Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, United Methodist Susquehanna Annual Conference, The Rev. Bob Walk, Simpson House Chaplain.

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