



Photo by Robin Warner

THE ROSE WINDOW TO BE RE-DEDICATED SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2015

It was Palm Sunday. The year was 1928. That morning the doors of the church were opened to the public for the very first time. The minister, Reverend Dr. William H. Jones, stepped to the central pulpit - today's lectern - and looked out upon a congregation said by the *Portland Press Herald* to have numbered more than 800.

Minister - As a tender and loving memorial of two whose lives shone in 'the beauty of holiness,' and as an abiding incentive to lift up our eyes to reflect the glories of our Christian faith, founded upon Jesus Christ and upon his chosen Apostles,...

People - We dedicate this Rose Window.

The window was given to the church in memory of Rinda and Thaddeus C. Lewis of Portland by their three adult children. Although the children had moved on many years earlier, the family's roots were firmly planted in local soil, and many of their descendants have now returned to Maine. The Lewises had been prominent members of the old First Freewill Baptist Church. Thaddeus Lewis, in fact, was the church's first clerk and was instrumental in helping the congregation relocate in 1884 to the Plymouth Church meetinghouse on Congress Street. Until his death ten years later, he and his business partners had both supplied produce to Portland's fishing fleet and then sold their catch on the fish exchange on the Portland Pier.

The Rose Window that honors the memories of Thaddeus and Rinda Lewis is an exquisite example of a nearly-lost art form, rediscovered only in the late nineteenth century when the artist's father and others revived in America a technique in stained window design not seen since the high Renaissance in the Gothic Cathedrals of Northern France. Marilyn Justice of the Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation recently called Williston-Immanuel's Rose Window "the most moving window (by Wright Goodhue) that I have ever beheld."

Harry Wright Goodhue was no more than 23 years old when he designed and crafted our Rose Window. Even at his young age his brilliant craftsmanship was recognized for its imaginative detail, color, and attention to the medieval forms and colors employed in centuries past. Among his impressive and increasingly recognized body of work are windows in the Riverside Church in the City of New York, the First Parish Church in Brookline, Christ Church Cranbrook, Michigan, and dozens of other churches built in the early twentieth century in the modern Gothic style. Tragically, Wright Goodhue took his own life at the age of 27, leaving behind sketches for windows to be installed in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

Of the artist, architectural historian Albert M. Tannler has said, "The shortness of Wright Goodhue's life, his presumed unhappiness at its end, and the way it ended, is poignant." Even so, "his intensive study of medieval iconography, his fascination with the character of medieval glass, and his imaginative, original, and unique revitalization of medieval forms and colors in modern stained glass windows produced brilliant works of ecclesiastical art. His extraordinary windows engender thoughtful hope and exultation."

Thanks to a generous grant from the estate of Ruth and Edward Nelson, our Rose Window has now been fully restored. The actual work of restoration was undertaken by local stained glass conservator and consultant Robin Neely, and by Bagala Window Works, both of Falmouth, Maine.

The Rose Window will be re-dedicated during morning worship on Sunday, January 11, 2015. Living descendants of Rinda and Thaddeus C. Lewis have been invited to attend.

By Doug Cruger