keeping with the theme of the year passing – each season is in one year like the seasons of life – our youth is like the Spring full of energy and curiosity, the years of adulthood like the summer, full of strength and achievement, our later working years  like the autumn, a season of fruitfulness and reflection, of harvest and fading light, our old age like the winter, a time for looking back and stories by the hearth, of rest and remembrance. It is as if each years turning seasons allow us in their turn to anticipate and reflect back on the seasons of our life. We are once again towards the end of the season of harvest approaching winter and as we walk in the fading autumn light like the writer of Psalm 121 we look for God’s help and presence in the shadow of the mountains.

The traditional Irish song ‘lord of all hopefulness’ is about seeking God’s strength in the four stages of the day, dawn, noon, home time and night-time. But these too, reflect the seasons of the year and of our lives, spring, summer, autumn, winter. So, we can sing this song as an invitation for God’s presence on the journey, whether it be a day, a year, or a lifetime.

Autumn leaves –

The Autumn leaves that fall around us represent the turning of the year from first buds of spring to the bear slumbering branches of winter. There may be events form the last year we want to mark, memories we want to treasure, people and things who have left us we want to honour on their journey beyond these shores. I invite you to find a leaf that for you represents each thing or person you want to mark in this way. we are then going to send these leaves on a journey, a life Journey with God’s presence surrounding them. while we do this I will sing ‘beyond these shores’ a song of our journey into the darkness of the unknown but with God’s presence before and around us.