Music has traditionally united communities across the generations. Songs, tunes, dances and lyrics have been the means by which the deep identities, imagery, stories and traditions of meaning have been shared and taken up across generations.

Singing together in community gives not only a common verbal language, but a shared emotional vocabulary as well. The notion of separate music belonging to different generations is by no means an essential dynamic of culture. By far the greater norm is shared musical culture across the generations.

Sadly our commercial music culture has divided the market and developed diverse genres that give opposing identities to the generations.

Churches have bought into this too. The more music is for passive listening/performance, the harder it is for us to find the broad common ground of musical connection.

But where music - music of almost any style - takes the role not of entertaining or appealing, but of participation and connecting and centres on connecting in relationship, any kinds of styles and genres can work.

The following suggestions draw form a diverse range of contexts – but the basis for their selection is the potential for young and old to participate in the collaborative meaning making of music together, in a variety of ways – singing, moving, gesture, posture, instrumentation, repetitive catch phrase, mastery of the lyrics.

As with all intergenerational engagement these need to be well coached in the community, and will probably take some time to rebuild the culture.
**Songs for Isaiah 2:1-55**

*Up-ety oo (Isaiah 2:3)*

Coin Buchanan, Boom Chicka Boom, track 7

This is classic whacky Colin Buchanan, unapologetic kids music. However, apart from the chorus of ‘Up up up-ety up, upety upety oo’ the words are straight out of Isaiah 2:3

In an intergenerational gathering, invite the children to sing the chorus of ‘upety-oo’ and charge the adults with nailing the Bible words. Of course once you’ve got everyone on board that way – sing it again and switch roles, so the children sing the bible words and the grown ups get some ‘Up-ety oo’.

*Trading My Sorrows*

Darrell Evans, Integrity Music, ccli 2574653
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYRc0JeQuC0

There are a few different versions of this, both male and female vocals on youtube. Find one that works for your context.

This song picks up on the ‘trading’ imagery in Isaiah 2, where weapons are exchanged for gardening tools.

However, the words could be tweaked to more closely reflect the language of Isaiah. Do this together as a community, looking at Isaiah 2, ask for suggestions to rework the lyrics, keeping the basic shape – though working in plural is better too.

‘We’re trading our…
We’re trading our…
We’re laying it down for the ……of the Lord’

Eg:

‘We’re trading our fighting
We’re trading our fear
We’re laying it down for the Peace of the Lord’

‘We’re trading our conflict
We’re trading our greed
We’re laying it down for the grace of the Lord’
Remember the most significant thing here it to capture the heart and sense of our prayers and longings before God – so a bit of fudging in some extra syllables is definitely legitimate. Sometimes, declaring the prophetic justice of God just doesn’t fit easily into our systems...

Eg:
‘We’re trading our detention centres
We’re trading our border-force-policy
We’re laying it down for the welcome of God’

**Songs for Matthew 24:**

*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus.*
TIS 272; BP&W 139,

For a more contemporary version, but still the traditional tune: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRAFQCOkjgE

This is a long-loved traditional advent hymn. Give it an intergenerational flavor and link it more closely to the text of Matthew 24 by inserting some periods of unexpected waiting. Between verses, half verses or rhyming couplets, stop the melody and let the chord ‘hang’ for an indeterminate amount of time – then continue. Lead this gently, but clearly, vocally, with a good strong breath to indicate that the line is beginning again.

**Video+Come thou Long Expected Jesus**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLCcTLCCpI5A

Set to the background of Come Thou Long Expected Jesus, this animation surveys the milestone Old Testament stories through to the birth narrative of Jesus. It captures the sense of anticipation through the story of the people of God.

It is the kind of video that you could use each week in advent in different ways: Just watching it as it stands works well for this theme of expectation.

Another time, turn the audio down and invite people in (intergenerational) pairs or triplets to try to identify all of the stories/characters that unfold through the animation.

Across the weeks of advent, you might have a group of artists, photographers and animators create an alternate video, that profiles other narratives from the Old Testament. Ask others who know the Biblical texts well to suggest some other, perhaps less well known stories to include, involving more than just the creative crew in this project.