



Waldorf English Week e.V.
www.english-week.de

May, 2025

**To the English Teachers at the
Rudolf Steiner Schools / Waldorf Schools**

We are delighted to invite you to the next



from **Sunday, November 9th**
to **Friday, November 14th, 2025**

in beautiful, historic **Haus Altenberg**, near Cologne.

Since its founding, the *English Week* has always seen its primary task as offering language teachers different possibilities to develop and support those personal and professional capabilities which Waldorf teaching, understood as an art, continually calls for. For those of you who are not familiar with the *English Week* here is a brief description, which can serve as a first introduction:

The concept of the English Week is based on our conviction that intensive artistic work with actors, directors, storytellers, poets and clowns, can be of immeasurable benefit for foreign language teachers. Thus, we view the daily three-hour artistic workshops as the keystone of the entire English Week. In addition, there are morning lectures based on the general conference theme and a wide variety of working groups addressing different methodological issues and questions, as well as a 'Market Place' offering an exchange of materials and ideas. We also regularly invite leading experts from outside of Waldorf education to offer new perspectives on language teaching. The evenings are full of the "Spirit of English" in the form of songs, dances and artistic presentations.

**The theme of this year's conference will be
"Moving Language: Encouraging Deep Listening, Agency
and Hope in Foreign Language Learning"**

In considering the rapidly changing world children and adolescents are growing up in today, the goals, contents and methods of teaching need to be continually questioned and re-examined. At the last *English Week*, we focused on questions regarding the widespread changes which artificial intelligence programs are introducing in education. In this year's *English Week*, we want to explore some of the profound *inner changes* which young people are experiencing.

Growing up in a world in which they are continually distracted by a never-ending onslaught of messages, images and information, developing capabilities of deep and focused listening has become increasingly difficult. Yet, to learn a foreign language, deep and sustained listening can be enormously helpful, if not essential, and we thus need to find ways to make this possible.

A further phenomenon that we need to address is a *passivity* caused by factors ranging from the enormous amount of free time spent passively in front of screens, to the amount of time spent in school just passively sitting in classrooms. Perhaps, now more than ever before, it is necessary to give pupils more opportunities to be able to take up their own initiatives, make their own choices and thereby experience self-efficacy and agency.

There is probably no greater hinderance to agency than a lack of *hope*, an increasingly widespread phenomenon among young people that has also contributed to significant increases in absenteeism and depression. How by "moving language," by encouraging deep listening and agency, can we also support our pupils in experiencing hope for themselves and others, along with the hope that the world can be changed for the better? While we realize that these are profound challenges, we share the hope that through working together at the *English Week* we will better be able to address them.

The lectures and courses in the English Week in 2025 will explore different ways of fruitfully and creatively working to realize these goals. Parallel to this, it has always been our deep-seated conviction that the artistic workshops, which constitute the 'heart' of each *English Week*, offer teachers unique chances to go substantially further in developing the entire range of their entire perceptual and expressive capabilities, all within a highly supportive environment full of warmth, humour, trust and hope. This personal and uplifting work is also very much rooted in deep listening and self-efficacy, enabling us to not only "talk the talk," but to "walk the walk" together.

The English Week Team 2025

We are very happy that **Paul Matthews**, England's leading specialist for creative writing, and **Norman Skillen** from Ireland, one of our co-founders, will also be able to join us again. This year for the fourth time we will have one of England's finest storytellers **Martin Maudsley** with us. We are delighted to have **Juanna Grace Lagada**, one of the most outstanding music teachers in the United Kingdom joining us for the first time to lead the English Week choir and bringing a rich repertoire of materials for her workshops. Juana was one of the founding class teachers at the St. Michaels Waldorf School in London and is presently teaching at the Moray Steiner School in Scotland. We're also very glad to have **Tatjana Pavlov-West** joining us for the first time. She brings a wealth of experience in post-colonial literature having taught this subject at universities in both South Africa and Germany and is now responsible for the intensive English year at the Freie Hochschule Stuttgart. We will also continue our inspiring tradition of having a special guest from outside of Waldorf education joining us as a guest lecturer and giving courses. We are delighted to welcome **Erika Piazzoli** (Trinity College, Dublin) as a special guest who will share her expertise and insights about working with drama and embodiment in foreign language learning; processes which she has instituted not only at her university but in working directly with migrants and differently abled people. We are very glad that **Douglas Kennedy** from Stuttgart will again be able to join us this year along with **Susan Wehner** from Hamburg, **Mario Radisic** from Haan-Gruiten, **Miriam Watson-Kastell** from Marburg, **Alexandra Spencer** from Berlin, and **Kavita Desai** from Freiburg. And naturally, the "old team" **Silvia Albert-Jahn** (*Mülheim*), **Christoph Jaffke** (*Stuttgart*), **Doris Schlott** (*Frankfurt*), **Peter Lutzker** (*Stuttgart*), **Robert McNeer** (*Ostuni, Italy*), **Martyn Rawson** (*Kiel/Hamburg*), **Ulrike Sievers** (*Hamburg*), **Alec Templeton** (*Basel*), **Catherine Bryden** (*Kirn*), **Sarah Kane** (*Forest Row, England*) and **Tessa Westlake** (*Cologne*) will be back.

Last but not least, due to some very fortunate circumstances, the award-winning, renowned Canadian guitarist **Don Alder** will be joining us on Sunday evening to give **an English Week concert!**

We will again offer an open '**Market Place**', designed to facilitate the exchange of teaching materials and ideas for all grade levels. This space is intended to enable teachers to directly offer and explain resource material and ideas they have developed. **Thus, please bring copies to exhibit and share; examples of students' work, and/or books you wish to recommend.**

We are very glad to be once again in *Haus Altenberg* (www.haus-altenberg.de). Whereas the rooms were newly renovated, that beautiful old Gothic cathedral in the courtyard is still standing there and for those of you who don't know it and the immediate area, it's a wonderful place to spend an inspiring week. At the same time, **the number of available rooms** in Haus Altenberg, due to damages caused by the 2021 floods **has become more limited than ever before**. Since we regularly have a long waiting list, we strongly suggest that you register soon. If it is possible for you, we also encourage you to please book double rooms, instead of single rooms.

To register please check our website <https://www.english-week.de/> (Haus Altenberg doesn't take any reservations).

We hope to see you in Altenberg!

Peter Lutzker • Silvia Albert-Jahn • Doris Schlott • Martyn Rawson • Christoph Jaffke
• Ulrike Sievers • Mario Radisic • Kavita Desai • Alexandra Spencer