



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

June, 2026

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

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to invite you to the next



from Sunday, November 1st

to Friday, November 6th, 2026

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
"The Social Arts of Language Learning and Teaching "**

One of the core ideas of Waldorf pedagogy is that teaching itself is an art which can be learned and practiced. In "Education and Art", Rudolf Steiner writes, "If teachers themselves feel a strong bond with the artistic element and appeal to the artistic appreciation in their pupils and if they create an artistic atmosphere in the classroom, the proper teaching methods and human influence will stream out into all other aspects of education." He explicitly makes the point that he is not talking about *arts* lessons, but about *all* lessons: "...art is in its proper place only when *all* teaching is arranged so that, at the right moment, the students' souls feel a need for the artistic; and art itself must be cultivated so that, in the artistic activities themselves, students feel the need for a rational understanding of, and dutiful concentration on, the things they have come to see as beautiful, as truly free, and thus as human."

In considering the world in which children and adolescents are growing up in today, we are called upon to consider anew what artistry in teaching and learning means. More than ever, we understand it as now being a *social art*, occurring within a community of learners in which pupils are affectively, creatively and cognitively engaged in their own language learning. In developing and supporting such communities, different forms of artistry in teaching are called for. Thus, we want to concretely address the question of how "artistic activities" in an "artistic atmosphere" can offer *today's* pupils the possibilities and capabilities of concentrating on "things they have come to see as beautiful, as truly free, and thus as human." And specifically, the question of how, at the *English Week*, we, as a community of teachers, can enhance our own capabilities to support pupils in realizing their possibilities.

The lectures and working groups in the English Week in 2026 will explore different ways of fruitfully working to achieve 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 realize artistry in their teaching through developing their perceptual and expressive capabilities within a highly supportive environment full of warmth, humour, trust and hope. Over the period of almost thirty years, we have seen again and again how this uplifting work can inspire and support us in taking on the challenges that teaching and learning in our times pose.

The English Week Team 2026

We are very happy that for the first time we will have **Cat Gerrard** joining us to teach an artistic workshop. Cat is a performer, storyteller, dramaturg and facilitator from London based in Berlin. She brings a wealth of experience in a broad range of drama and storytelling activities, and we see her as a perfect 'fit' for the English Week. For the first time we will also have **Julie Vandamme** from Belgium as a co-teacher in different courses, sharing her rich experiences in working with literature in high school. A number of our "newcomers" from last year will be able to join us again. We are delighted to have **Juanna Grace Lagada**, one of the most outstanding music teachers in the United Kingdom joining us for the second time to lead the English Week choir and bringing a rich repertoire of materials for her workshops. We also continue our inspiring tradition of having a special guest from outside of Waldorf education joining us as a guest lecturer and giving courses and are delighted to welcome back **Erika Piazzoli** (Trinity College, Dublin) as our special guest who will again share her expertise and insights about working with drama and embodiment in foreign language learning. We're very glad to have **Tatjana Pavlov-West** (Freie Hochschule Stuttgart) joining us for the second time. We are delighted to welcome back our longstanding and highly experienced colleague **Ivone Grene** from Denmark. We are once again very fortunate that **Norman Skillen** from Ireland, one of our original co-founders, will be able to join us again. For the fifth time we will have one of England's finest storytellers **Martin Maudsley** back with us. We are very fortunate that **Douglas Kennedy** (Stuttgart) will again be able to join us this year along with **Susan Wehner** (Hamburg), **Mario Radisic** (Haan-Gruiten), **Miriam Kastell-Watson** (Marburg), **Alexandra Spencer** (Berlin), and **Kavita Desai** (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** (Hamburg), **Ulrike Sievers** (Hamburg), **Alec Templeton** (Basel), **Catherine Bryden** (Kirn), **Sarah Kane** (Forest Row, England) and **Tessa Westlake** (Bochum) will be back.

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