United Methodist Bishop Scott Jones and his wife, Mary Lou Reece, joined members of the local Methodist church at a potluck lunch last Tuesday, accompanied by District Superintendent Kay Alnor of Ogallala.

Jones started his Bishop role eight years ago in Kansas, serving the Kansas East and Kansas West conferences. Those conferences were recently merged with Nebraska to make up the Great Plains Annual Conference, involving 1,000 churches.

Staff is currently maintained in Lincoln as well as in Topeka and Wichita, Kan. The couple has a home in Wichita, Kan., and recently established residence in Lincoln, as well.

Bishop Jones acknowledged the vast changes in the world, expressing how important it is to adapt.

“How is God helping you make those kind of changes so you’re effective in the community?” he asked as he addressed the group at an informal setting.

He started the day Sept. 4 in McCook, addressing that issue, then visited in Haigler, Imperial on to Wauneta to end up in Grand Island that evening. He focused on relating everything to the United Methodist Church mission, “Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” He addressed especially reaching out to unchurched children.

He cited many success examples from the local rural church level to worldwide activity. Among them is how the United Methodist Church is partnering with the Gates Foundation to help end malaria, having cut malaria cases in half in Africa in the last five years.

A fourth-generation Methodist pastor, Bishop Jones was born in Tennessee and raised in Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana and Colorado. His bachelor’s degree in Philosophy was earned at the University of Kansas. He received his Master of Theology and Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas.

Jones pastored four different churches in 11 years in northern Texas, then served on the SMU faculty for seven years before being elected as a bishop.

His wife has roots in Kansas and serves as president of Reece Construction Company, which builds bridges.

They have three children, one of whom is a fifth-generation United Methodist pastor in Plano, Texas. They plan to visit their son’s church soon where he’s starting a separate service geared to the average 25-year-old set.