Anglican diocese launches $50,000 Rangiatea appeal

The Anglican Diocese of Wellington launched a $50,000 appeal for the rebuilding of Okai’s historic Rangiatea Church at a service on the site yesterday.

The 146-year-old church was destroyed in a suspected arson attack last Saturday morning.

Yesterday’s 30-minute service, led by district Canon Lance Robinson, marked the pilgrimage from Wellington of Archbishop of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia the Most Reverend Brian Davis and Anglican Bishop the Right Reverend Brian Carroll.

Last night a $5000 donation was made to the church’s vestry committee as a first contribution. The appeal, with target sum of $50,000, would be contributed to the 73 parishes in the Wellington Diocese which cover the central lower North Island, Archbishop Davis said.

“The church at Rangiatea has been a treasure for all Anglicans in the last century and a half,” he said in a prepared statement.

“We honour it as the first great church built in this area of the North Island.

“It has held a special place in the hearts of our people, and we have mourned with our brothers and sisters of Te Rode Rangiatea at its loss.”

During the service, attended by a gathering of about 50, Archbishop Davis said they hope to share the pain of the people of Rangiatea in their place of inspiration and spiritual strength.

He called for forgiveness rather than bitterness to follow in the loss of Okai’s Maori community.

“Out of the ashes of disaster comes new life. Out of our pain comes resurrection.”

The tragic loss of Rangiatea would bring the community together - both pakeha and Maori, Archbishop Davis said.