

PLAINS, Ga. (AP) — President-elect Jimmy Carter says that when his small Baptist church decided during an emotional meeting to drop its racial barriers, "I was just one of the church members."

He later welcomed a black man to a worship service.

Carter, according to his fellow Baptists, exerted no pressure during the two and three-quarter hour meeting Sunday. Nonetheless, the congregation did as he has advocated since 1965.

It opened the church's doors to all who want to worship, regardless of race. And, it voted 107-84 to retain the pastor who agreed with Carter's pro integration stand, The Rev. Mr. Bruce Edwards.

The church decision began a week for Carter in which he plans to hold a news conference today at the auditorium of the Southwest Georgia Agricultural Experimentation Station near here. Wednesday, he will meet with Vice President-elect Walter F. Mondale and congressional leaders near Atlanta.

The church also voted to set up a screening committee consisting of the pastor and four deacons to be elected by the congregation in about two weeks.

"We felt the whole world was looking at Plains today," said one of the church's deacons, Frank Williams.

The church controversy was started by the Rev. Mr. Clennon King, a non

denominational minister from Albany, Ga., onetime Republican gubernatorial candidate and civil rights activist. Just before the Nov. 2 election, he tried unsuccessfully to join the church in a move many saw as an effort to embarrass Carter.

Sunday, Carter waited in the rain and said after the votes were announced, "think it's wonderful. It vindicates the church. It vindicates the people of Plains."

Carter attended an evening service Sunday with about 65 other persons, including the black Secret Service agent who frequently accompanies him to church. The whites-only policy, adopted in 1965, had been ignored for black reporters, agents, and the tourists who came to Plains during Carter's candidacy, until the Rev. Mr. King publicly challenged it.

Midway through the service, a black man from Selma, N.C., Roger Sessoms, entered the church and sat in the pew in front of Carter.

Then the congregation set up the committee to screen applicants for church membership. Finally, it voted

See (CHI ROH Pace ?