

Episcopal bishop Prince Singh suspended but not deposed after Title IV investigation concludes

by [Kathryn Post](#)

December 17, 2024



Prince Grenville Singh, former provisional bishop of the Episcopal dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan, in December 2022. (Video screengrab/Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan)

Eighteen months since Bishop Prince Singh's two adult sons, Nivedhan and Eklan Singh, made [allegations](#) on [social media](#) that their father was guilty of physical abuse, alcoholism, and emotional abuse, the head of the Episcopal Church has announced the misconduct complaints against Singh have been resolved.

Prince Singh, the former provisional bishop of the Episcopal dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan who [resigned in September 2023](#), will be suspended from ministry for at least three more years, according to the terms of an accord reached between Singh and Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe.

Singh has been the subject of two clergy misconduct complaints. One involved allegations that he physically and emotionally abused his wife at the time, Roja Suganthi-Singh, and his sons; drank alcohol excessively at home; and was publicly deceitful about facts regarding his divorce with Suganthi-Singh, now his ex-wife.

The second complaint, which came from members of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester where Singh previously served, included allegations of misusing Title IV—the Episcopal Church’s process for handling clergy misconduct—and of engaging in vindictiveness and public shaming.

In an announcement released Friday, Rowe said that, while Singh continues to dispute the allegations, the accord, or written resolution, resolves both complaints. The terms of the accord were approved by the Disciplinary Board for Bishops, a church court [made of](#) 10 bishops, six other clergy, and six lay people.

“My goal in negotiating this accord with Bishop Singh has been to achieve [Title IV’s goals](#) by identifying paths for him to be accountable, to amend his life, and then to seek reconciliation with his family and his former diocese if and when they are willing to do so,” Rowe’s announcement, sent to denominational members via email, said. “I also expect him to repair his relationships with his colleagues in the House of Bishops.”

A media statement released Saturday morning, by Singh’s church lawyer said though Singh denies the allegations, he consents to the accord’s terms and commits to completing them faithfully. “In particular, Bishop Singh deeply regrets the pain suffered by his sons and former spouse and is pledged to pursue reconciliation and healing with them,” the statement said.

However, in an email, Nivedhan Singh voiced concerns with the final accord, calling the outcome “a tragic conclusion to what has been a deeply painful and retraumatizing process.

“Despite the Episcopal Church’s well-thought-out Title IV process, this Accord highlights significant shortcomings when the Presiding Bishop exercises unilateral

authority to override the findings of earlier investigative panels,” Nivedhan Singh wrote.

In July, a conference panel that oversaw informal proceedings involving Nivedhan and Eklan Singh and Suganthi-Singh’s allegations against Prince Singh emailed the involved parties the draft of a proposed order that recommended permanently removing Singh from ministry, according to a copy of the draft order obtained by reporters. The panel said it found clear and convincing evidence that Prince Singh “engaged in persistent and ongoing physical violence directed at each of his sons” and in “serious deceptive behavior in the Church for his own personal benefit,” according to the proposed order. The panel also said Prince Singh had violated church canons and continued to deny the allegations.

“The Conference Panel is now convinced, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent cannot be allowed to continue the exercise of ordained ministry under these circumstances and, given his unwillingness to even admit to the behavior described above, the Conference Panel finds and hereby recommends deposition from ministry to be the appropriate action for the good of the Church,” the proposed order says. However, the matter did not fully resolve at that juncture and was referred to a hearing panel.

In an email, Amanda Skofstad, public affairs officer for the denomination, emphasized that the conference panel order was a draft, and all parties must agree to a conference panel’s proposed order for it to be enforceable. “The conference panel referred the matter to a hearing panel, and no order was issued,” she wrote.

In November, after taking office, Rowe announced he would be assuming the role of presiding bishop in the Title IV cases involving Prince Singh (Rowe’s predecessor, Michael Curry, had recused himself from these cases, in part due to [allegations that he had mishandled](#) the claims against Singh). According to Skofstad, “the canons give the presiding bishop the authority to negotiate an accord with the respondent at nearly any point in the process, including during hearing panel proceedings.”

When Rowe sent drafts of his proposed accord to Prince Singh’s sons and ex-wife, they replied to Rowe, saying the proposal “undermines the Title IV process that we committed to, erodes our trust in the Church, and perpetuates harm to other survivors and the wider Episcopal community,” per emails obtained by reporters.

They suggested that the accord over-relied on Rowe's sole judgment, pointed out Rowe's lack of psychological expertise, and questioned what would happen when Rowe ceased serving as presiding bishop, since Rowe is personally responsible for enforcing many of the terms of the accord. They asked Rowe to distinguish between the two Title IV cases and to either adopt an accord that ends in deposition or move the Title IV process to the hearing panel stage.

In Friday's announcement, Rowe acknowledged "canonical constraints on the conference panel phase of our Title IV process" that prevented Prince Singh from hearing a full account of the allegations against him and their impact. "By negotiating this accord that will require rigorous therapeutic and relational work, I hope to continue the work begun by the conference panel to foster his repentance and amendment of life," he wrote.

Skofstad noted that the members of the conference panel, which authored the draft order recommending Singh be deposed, also belong to the Disciplinary Board for Bishops, which approved the accord.

Per the terms, Singh will be suspended for at least three more years and after that will return to ministry at the presiding bishop's discretion, providing Rowe is "satisfied he is fit for ministry."

Singh will also undergo a psychological and psychiatric assessment by a professional designated by Rowe and will "participate in psychological work, education, and training" in domestic abuse, anger management, and proper exercise of authority. He is required to address his relationship with alcohol, participate in Title IV trainings, and apologize to and visit "people, congregations, and other groups whom I identify and who are willing," according to Rowe's announcement.

Singh will be required to participate in reconciliation work with members of the Diocese of Rochester and with his sons and ex-wife if they consent to participate. If he does not appropriately fulfill the terms of the accord—including remaining silent about the "disciplinary matters, the allegations against him, or their resolution"—Rowe will have the "sole authority" to direct the president of the Disciplinary Board of Bishops to depose Singh or remove him permanently from ordained ministry.

"Bishop Singh is grateful for the Presiding Bishop's devoted efforts to resolve these disputes consistent with the stated aims of Title IV and for his ongoing supervision

and guidance,” the statement released on his behalf said. “With God’s help, Bishop Singh looks forward to returning to active ministry and continuing his service to God and The Episcopal Church at some future date.”

In emails, Nivedhan and Eklan Singh and Suganthi-Singh insisted reconciliation cannot occur with someone who denies the allegations against him.

“This Accord sends a dangerous message: that even when clergy are found to have abused their power, lied to their superiors, and harmed their families and communities, the Church’s priority is to rehabilitate the abuser, not protect the victims,” Nivedhan Singh wrote. —Religion News Service