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Bishop Prince Singh restricted from ordained ministry amid Title IV abuse allegations probe

BY DAVID PAULSEN

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[Episcopal News Service] The Rt. Rev. Prince Singh, who has served since February 2022 as bishop provisional of the dioceses of Eastern Michigan and Western Michigan, has been restricted from exercising any aspects of his ordained ministry, The Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs announced on Sept. 7, amid an investigation into domestic abuse allegations against him.

The decision to restrict Singh's ministry was made by the Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel III, in the oversight role normally filled by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who has recused himself from the investigation into Singh's behavior, according to the church's [one-paragraph statement](#). Daniel, a former bishop of East Carolina, last served as dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York until June 2022.

The restriction on Singh applies to "all aspects of ordained ministry – in The Episcopal Church or in any other church," the release says, and it "will remain in effect until further notice."

The statement came days after House of Deputies President Julia Ayala Harris and supporters demanded reform of the church's disciplinary process following Ayala Harris' sexual harassment [complaint against a retired bishop](#). The latest developments also follow a letter drafted by several female bishops from western United States dioceses that asked for a full discussion of bishop discipline at the upcoming House of Bishops meeting to address growing perceptions and concerns that ["bishops get a free pass on behavioral issues."](#)

In June 2023, Singh, who formerly served as bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, New York, was accused publicly by his two sons of a [history of physical, verbal and psychological abuse](#) dating back decades, including toward his now ex-wife. At that time, Singh said he welcomed an investigation of the matter under The Episcopal Church's Title IV canons on bishop discipline, and he was allowed to remain active as a bishop while the case proceeded.



Bishop Prince Singh tells the Dioceses of Eastern Michigan and Western Michigan of his engagement and upcoming marriage in a video message June 16. Photo: YouTube

Since then, his sons, Nivedhan Singh and Ekalaivan Singh, have intensified their calls for the church to respond to the allegations against their father, including by launching a website where they posted a range of documents and multimedia evidence. They also have accused Curry of not adequately responding to their earlier calls for action or to Singh's ex-wife, Jebaroja Singh. The couple divorced in 2022.

As is consistent with the private nature of Title IV cases, Curry and other churchwide leaders have said little publicly about the case. It is unclear where the investigation is in the process outlined by the church's [Title IV canons](#).

[Those 20 canons](#) apply to all clergy. When a complaint is made, an intake officer determines whether a complainant's information, if true, would constitute an offense. If so, the next step would be to produce an intake report. In a case involving a bishop, that report is reviewed by the Reference Panel of the Disciplinary Board for Bishops.

The disciplinary board is made up of 18 elected members, a mix of bishops, other clergy and lay leaders, though most of the board's work is handled by the three people on the Reference Panel: the presiding bishop, the intake officer and the president of the disciplinary board.

Because Curry has recused himself from the Singh investigation, Daniel is presumed to have taken his place on the Reference Panel in this case. The Reference Panel, after reviewing the intake report and potentially gathering additional information would have several options, ranging from closing the case with little more than a "pastoral response" to advancing it for consideration of disciplinary action.

Singh announced his decision to resign as bishop of Rochester in July 2021. The next month he

became a candidate bishop for provisional of Eastern Michigan and Western Michigan and was elected to that joint role in October.

His service in those two dioceses followed the 2020 suspension of the Rt. Rev. Wayne Hougland Jr., former bishop of the dioceses of Western Michigan and Eastern Michigan, for an extramarital affair.

While Singh's ministry is restricted, the standing committees of each diocese will serve as the dioceses' ecclesiastical authority. "The Standing Committees will communicate further details of our next steps together via email tomorrow. Please continue to hold our dioceses, our leadership, and one another in your prayers," the dioceses said [Sept. 7 in a joint news release](#) reacting to the news.

– *David Paulsen is a senior reporter and editor for Episcopal News Service. He can be reached at dpaulsen@episcopalchurch.org.*

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