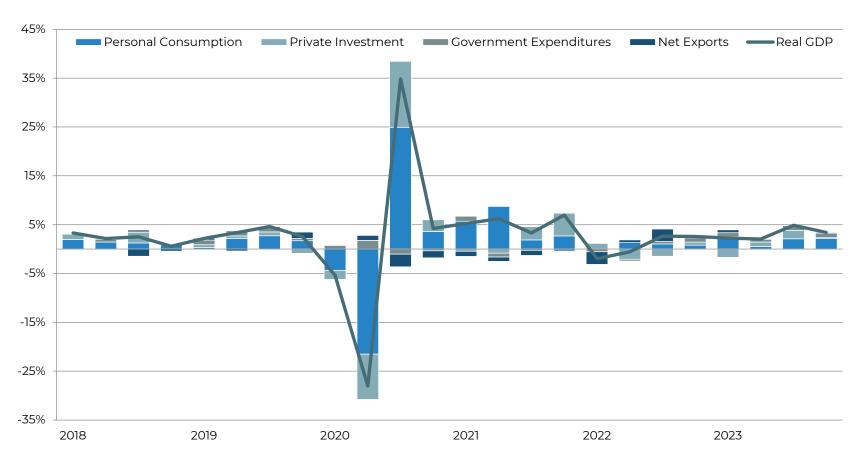




Gross domestic product increased at a 3.4% annualized rate last quarter, revised up from the previously reported 3.2% pace, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis said in its third estimate of fourth-quarter GDP. Growth was boosted by strong consumer spending and business investment in nonresidential structures like factories and healthcare facilities. The report also showed profits rising at a solid clip last quarter, driven by nonfinancial corporations. The economy is growing faster than the 1.8% pace Fed officials regard as the non-inflationary rate of growth. It grew at a 4.9% pace in the July-September quarter, and expanded 2.5% in 2023, an acceleration from 1.9% in 2022. Growth estimates for the first quarter are around a 2.0% pace.

### **Economic Growth**

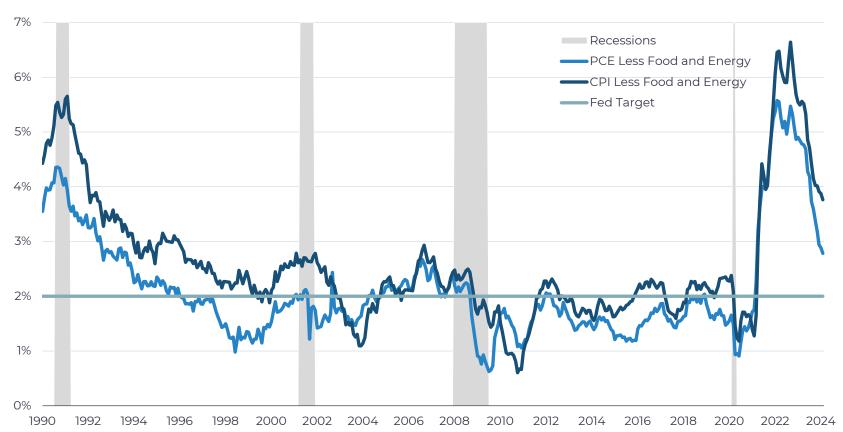
Contributions to Percent Change in Real GDP (Annualized Q/Q % Change)



U.S. central bankers are downplaying any urgency to cutting rates amid sticky inflation, with one warning a failure of price pressures to further abate might even push the central bank to raise rates again. Although inflation has fallen and will likely continue to move back toward the 2% target, Fed officials are not yet at the point where it is appropriate to lower the policy rate, as they continue to see a number of upside risks to inflation. Fed officials have recently voiced concern about the "bumps" the Fed was encountering so far this year along the path to returning inflation to its target. The combination of strong job market data and limited progress on inflation in the last couple of months has amplified the calls among top officials - including Chair Jerome Powell - to be "patient" as they approach the decision on when to cut rates.

## Inflation Outlook

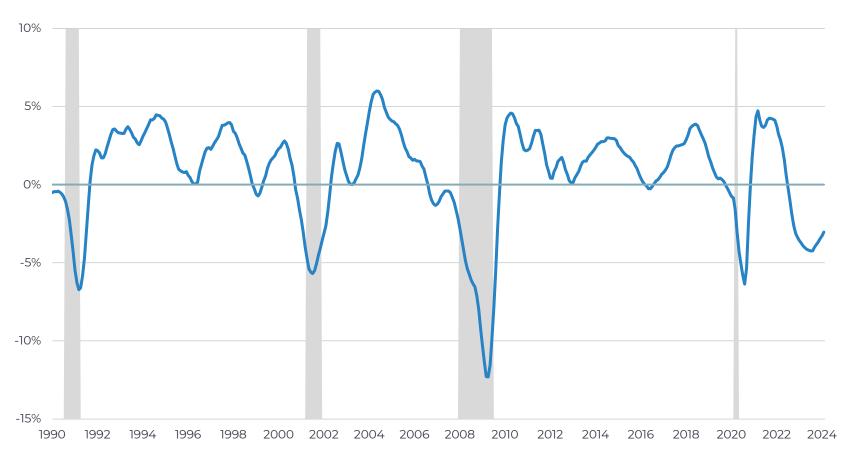
Consumer Price Index (Core) and Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index (Core) (Y/Y % Change)



According to the Conference Board, the LEI for the U.S. rose in February for the first time since February 2022. Strength in weekly hours worked in manufacturing, stock prices, the Leading Credit Index<sup>TM</sup>, and residential construction drove the LEI's first monthly increase in two years. However, consumers' expectations and the ISM® Index of New Orders have yet to recover, and the six- and twelve-month growth rates of the LEI remain negative. Despite February's increase, the Index still suggests some headwinds to growth going forward. The Conference Board expects annualized U.S. GDP growth to slow over the Q2 to Q3 2024 period, as rising consumer debt and elevated interest rates weigh on consumer spending.

### U.S. Economic Outlook

Leading Economic Index (Six-Month Moving Average of the Six-Month Rate of Change)

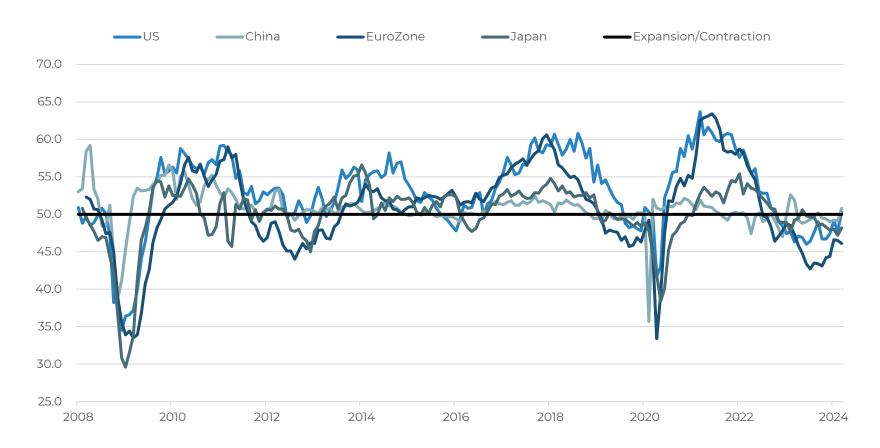


Source: Conference Board (Reported monthly)

The February PMI survey saw the rebound in global manufacturing gather pace. The output PMI advanced to its highest level since May 2023. The new orders index also rose above the 50-mark for the first time in 20 months. An improving orders-to-inventory ratio and upward momentum in both new export business and employment all suggest the underlying dynamics of the manufacturing sector are also moving in the right direction. Supply chain stresses seem to have faded somewhat, at least on aggregate.

## Global Economic Outlook

Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) (A PMI over 50 represents growth in manufacturing)

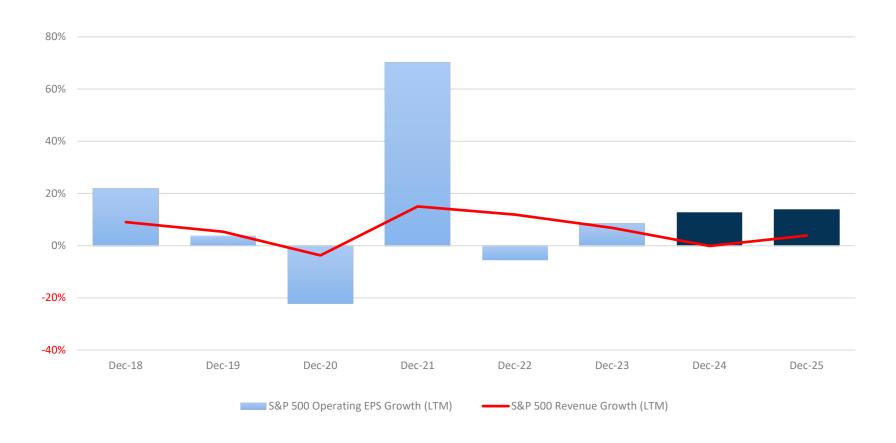


Source: ISM, Markit

According to FactSet, the bottom-up target price target for the S&P 500 over the next 12 months is 5759, which is 11.9% above the closing price of 5147. At the sector level, the Information Technology (+15.4%) and Health Care (+14.9%) sectors are expected to see the largest price increases. On the other hand, the Materials (+3.2%) sector is expected to see the smallest price increase. Overall, there are 11,599 ratings on stocks in the S&P 500. Of these 11,599 ratings, 53.9% are Buy ratings, 40.5% are Hold ratings, and 5.6% are Sell ratings. At the sector level, the Communication Service (64%) and Energy (62%) sectors have the highest percentages of Buy ratings, while the Materials (45%) and Consumer Staples (45%) sectors have the lowest percentages of Buy ratings.

## **Corporate Profitability**

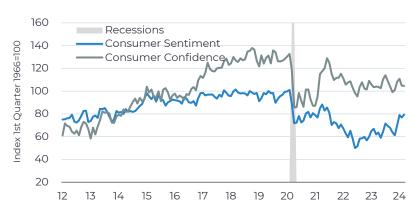
S&P 500 Operating Earnings Per Share and Revenue Per Share Growth (Y/Y % Change)



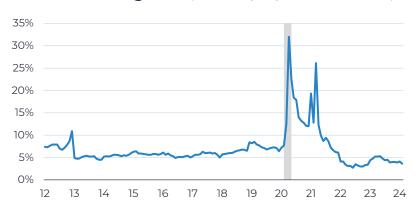
As reported by the Conference Board, consumer confidence in February declined slightly as consumers remained concerned with elevated price levels. March's write-in responses showed an uptick in concerns about food and gas prices, but in general complaints about gas prices have been trending downward. Indeed, average 12-month inflation expectations came in at 5.3% - barely changed from February's four-year low of 5.2%. Recession fears continued to trend downward both in write-in responses and as measured by consumers' Perceived Likelihood of a U.S. Recession over the next 12 months. Meanwhile, consumers expressed more concern about the U.S. political environment compared to prior months.

## Consumer Outlook

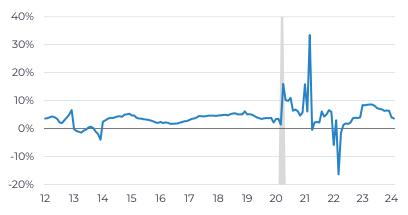
#### **Consumer Sentiment & Confidence Indexes**



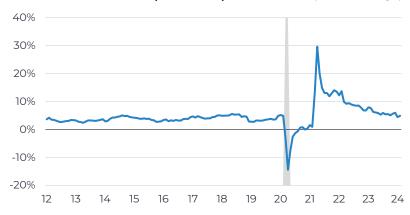
### Personal Saving Rate (Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate)



### Disposable Personal Income (Y/Y % Change)



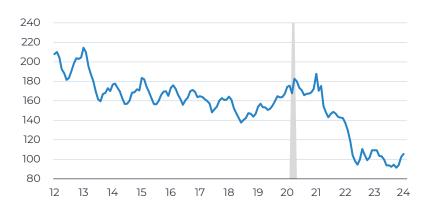
#### Personal Consumption Expenditures (Y/Y % Change)



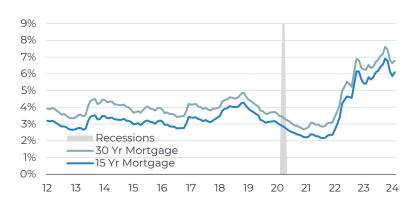
A major settlement reached between the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and home sellers could bring significant changes to the real estate world. The full implications of the \$418 million settlement for the U.S. housing market are not yet clear. Even so, NAR's agreement to scrap longstanding rules governing broker commission fees will slash a key expense Americans face when selling their homes. The agreement settles four antitrust cases that accused the powerful realtor organization of working with real estate brokerage firms to establish rules requiring home sellers to pay buyer broker fees, which they argue resulted in inflated rates. Most home sellers currently pay about 5 to 6 percent in commission fees, split between their own broker and the buyer's broker. For a \$1 million home, this could amount to \$50,000 to \$60,000 in fees.

## **Housing Market Outlook**

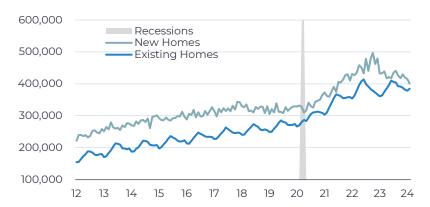
Housing Affordability (higher = more affordable)



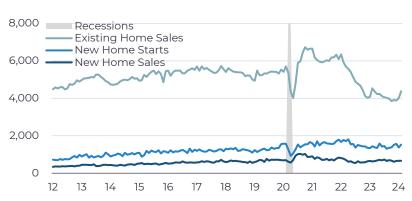
### Average Fixed Rate Mortgage in the U.S.®



### Median Selling Price of New and Existing Homes



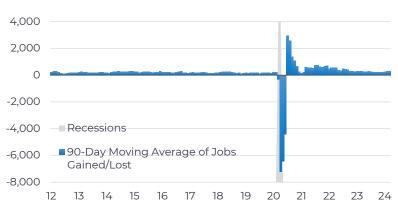
# Housing Starts, Existing Home Sales and New Home Sales (000's)



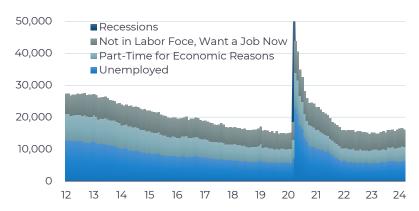
U.S. job growth blew past expectations in March and wages increased at a steady clip, suggesting the economy ended the first quarter on solid ground and potentially delaying anticipated Federal Reserve interest rate cuts this year. The Labor Department's employment report on Friday also showed the unemployment rate fell to 3.8% last month from 3.9% in February. The decline in the jobless rate reflected a sharp rebound in household employment, which more than absorbed the 469,000 people who joined the labor force. The U.S. economy is outshining its global peers even though the Fed has raised rates by 525 basis points since March 2022 to dampen inflation. Though the strong hiring did not alter expectations that the U.S. central bank would start easing rates this year given increased labor supply, financial markets are doubtful.

## **Labor Market Outlook**

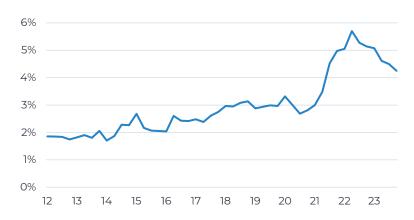
Jobs Gained/Lost (000's) with 12-Month Moving Average



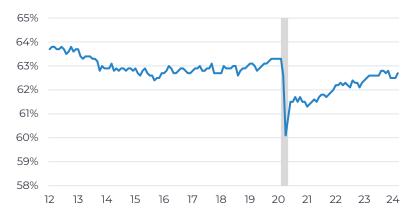
#### Labor Market Slack (000's)



### Wage Growth (Y/Y % Change)



### Labor Force Participation Rate

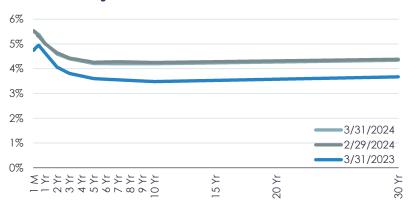




Market swings punctuated the first quarter as "central bank speak" proliferated and caused confusion. Fixed income generally disappointed for the quarter - emerging markets bonds were the exception. However, global bonds saw better performance for the month of March. The volatility in fixed income was not surprising given some of the large swings experienced by the 10-year US Treasury yield, moving below 4% and above 4.3% over the course of the quarter.

## U.S. Treasury Market

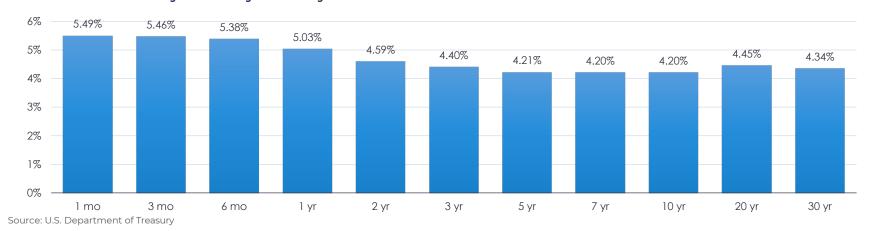
### **U.S Treasury Yield Curve**



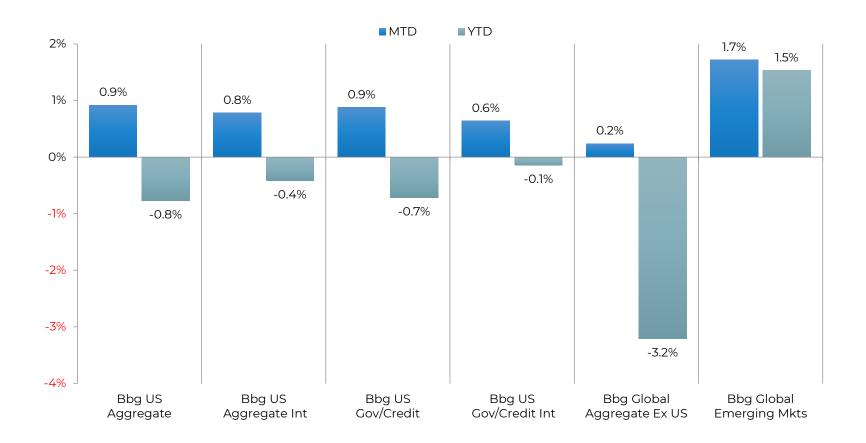
### Historical U.S. 10-Year Treasury Rate



### Current U.S. Treasury Yields by Maturity



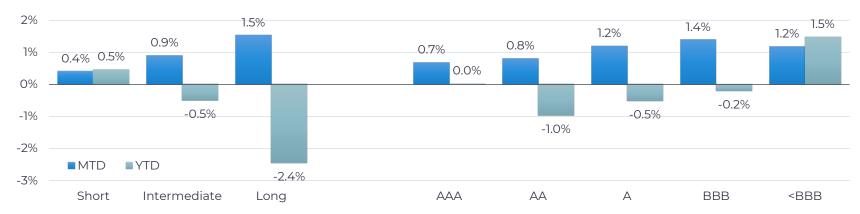
# Global Fixed Income Returns by Bellwether Index



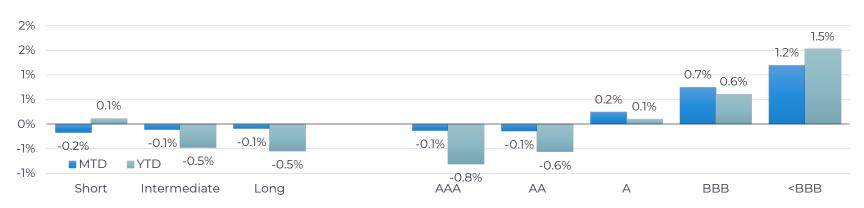
Source: Bloomberg Barclays (BB)

# Domestic Fixed Income Returns by Maturity and Credit Quality

### Domestic Bond Market - Taxable

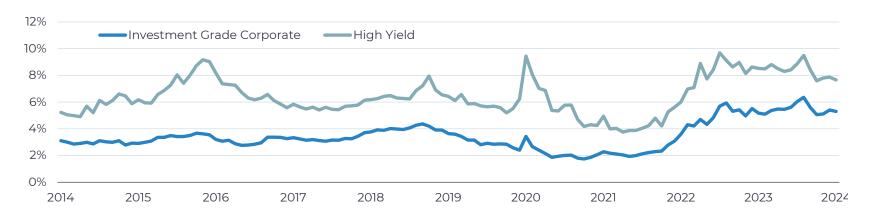


### Domestic Bond Market - Municipal

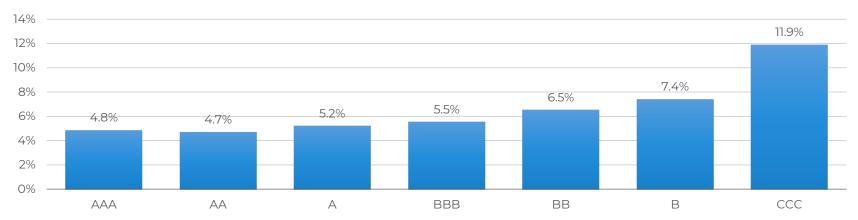


## Domestic Fixed Income Bond Yields

### Historical Corporate Bond Market Yield to Worst

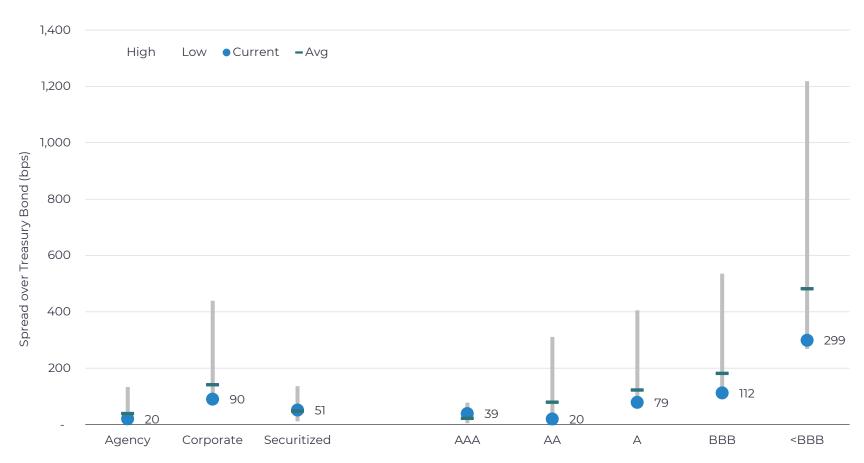


### Current Corporate Bond Market Yields by Credit Quality



# Domestic Fixed Income Bond Spreads

### Current Bond Spreads Compared to 15-Year Range and 15-Year Average

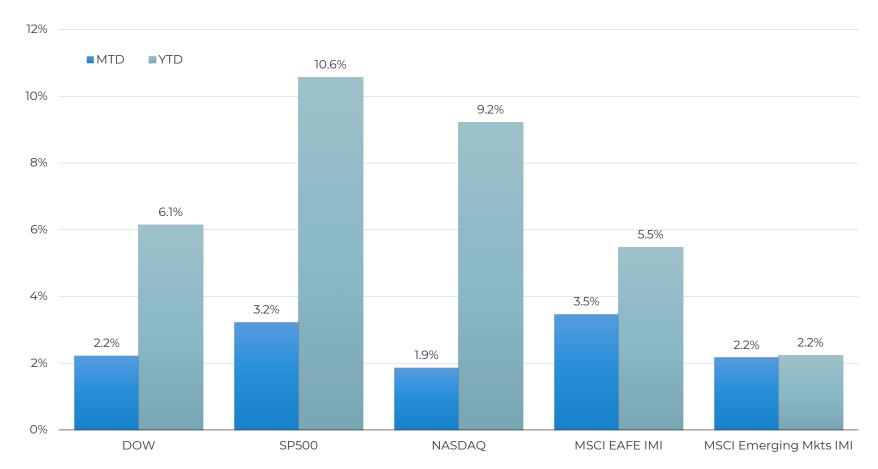




The first quarter was a strong one for equities around the world, with few exceptions. Japanese equities were the standout performer, posting double-digit gains. This was followed by the U.S., with the S&P 500 also gaining more than 10%. European equities also posted solid gains, with UK equity gains more tepid. Emerging market equities also experienced small gains while Chinese equities in particular lost modest ground in the first quarter, adding to oversold conditions. As it relates to size and style, Mega/Large Cap and Growth were standouts. At the sector level, Communication Services and Energy led the pack up 10.6% and 6.6% respectively.

## Global Equity Returns by Bellwether Index

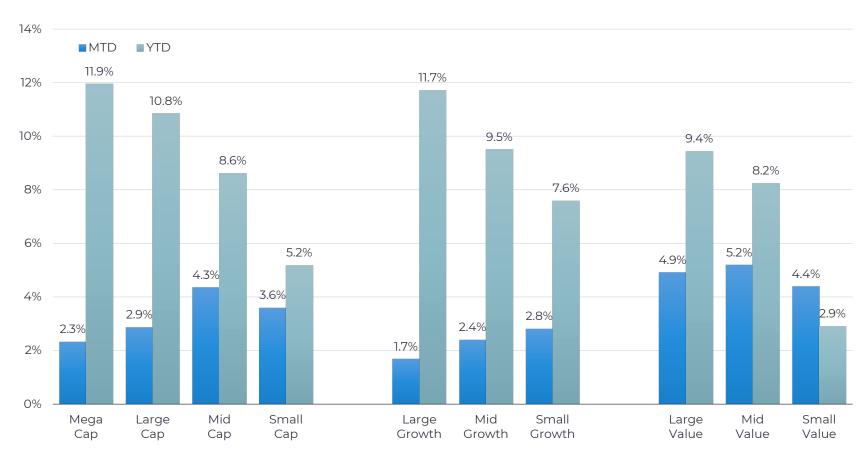
### **Global Equity Markets**



Source: S&P Dow Jones, NASDAQ, MSCI

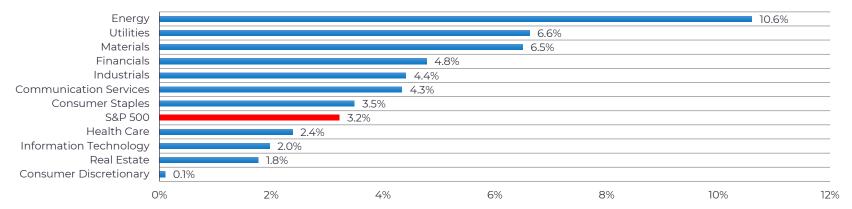
# Domestic Equity Returns by Market Cap & Style

### **Domestic Equity Markets**

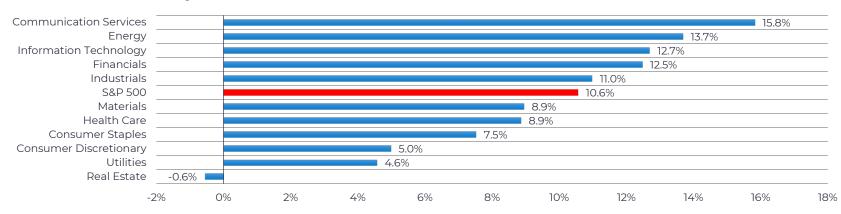


# Domestic Equity Returns by Sector

### MTD S&P 500 Returns by Sector



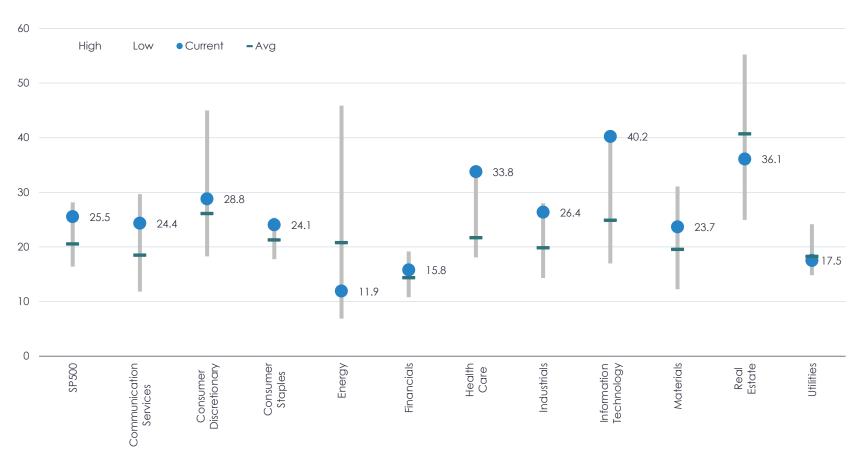
### YTD S&P 500 Returns by Sector



Source: S&P Dow Jones

# Domestic Equity Valuations by Sector

### Trailing 12 Month P/E Ratio Compared to 10-Year Range and 10-Year Average



## **Economic Indicator Descriptions**

- Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP): GDP is a basic measure of U.S. economic output adjusted for inflation. Alternatively, it can be thought of as the final value of all goods and services produced within the U.S. Positive GDP growth signals an expanding economy.
- Consumer Price Index (CPI): Measuring the change in the CPI provides an
  estimate for inflation. The CPI tracks the price of a basket of consumer goods
  and services. High inflation or deflation (negative inflation) can be signs of
  economic worry. CPI is typically reported in two ways: headline and core CPI.
  Headline CPI includes all categories that comprise the CPI basket of goods and
  services.
- Personal Consumption Expenditure Chain-type Price Index (PCEPI):
   Measuring the change in the PCEPI provides an estimate for inflation. In
   comparison to CPI, which uses one set of expenditure weights for several years,
   this index uses expenditure data from the current period and the preceding
   period. This price index method assumes that the consumer has substituted
   from goods whose prices are rising to goods whose prices are stable or falling.
   Core PCEPI, which is closely monitored by the Fed, strips out the more volatile
   Food and Energy categories.
- Conference Board Index of Leading Economic Indicators (LEI): The LEI is
  designed to signal peaks and troughs in the business cycle. The ten
  components include: average weekly manufacturing hours; average
  weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance; manufacturers' new
  orders for consumer goods and materials; ISM® Index of New Orders;
  manufacturers' new orders for nondefense capital goods excluding aircraft
  orders; building permits for new private housing units; stock prices of 500
  common stocks; Leading Credit Index™; interest rate spread on 10-year Treasury
  bonds less federal funds and average consumer expectations for business
  conditions.
- The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) PMI Index: The PMI is a composite index of five "sub-indicators", which are extracted through surveys to purchasing managers from around the country. The five sub-indexes are: Production, New orders, Supplier deliveries, Inventories and Employment level. An Index value over 50 indicates expansion; below 50 indicates contraction.
- The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) Non-manufacturing Index (NMI): The NMI is a composite index of four "sub-indicators", which are extracted through surveys to purchasing managers. The four sub-indexes: Business activity, New orders, Employment, Supplier deliveries. An Index value over 50 indicates expansion; below 50 indicates contraction.

- Consumer Confidence Index (CCI): The Consumer Confidence Index is a well-known proxy for the attitudes of U.S. consumer towards the business climate, personal finances and spending. This index attempts to measure the confidence that consumers have in the overall economy. This is important because consumer spending accounts for a large portion of U.S. GDP.
- Consumer Sentiment Index (MCSI): The MCSI uses telephone surveys to gather information on consumer expectations regarding the overall economy. The MSCI is becoming more useful for investors because it gives a monthly snapshot of whether consumers feel like spending money by accessing their views on the business climate, personal finance, and spending in order to judge their level of optimism/pessimism. This is important because consumer spending accounts for a large portion of U.S. GDP.
- Disposable Personal Income per Capita (DPI): DPI is the amount of money that households have available for spending and saving after income taxes have been accounted for. DPI is monitored to gauge the overall state of the economy.
- Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE): PCE consists of the actual and imputed expenditures of households including durables, non-durables and services.
- Retail Sales: The retail sales report captures in-store sales as well as catalog and
  other out-of-store sales. The report also breaks down sales figures into groups
  such as food and beverages, clothing, and autos. The results are often
  presented two ways: with and without auto sales being counted, because
  their high sticker price can add extravolatility to the data.
- Housing Affordability Index (HAI): Published monthly by the National Association of Realtors, the HAI index has a value of 100 when the medianincome family has sufficient income to purchase a median-priced existing home. A higher index number indicates that more households can afford to purchase a home.
- Unemployment Rate: Calculated monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate is a gauge of the health of the U.S. labor market. High unemployment can stifle the growth of the economy.
- Wage Growth: Calculated quarterly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the
  employment cost index measures the growth of employee compensation
  (wages and benefits). The index is based on a survey of employer payrolls in the
  final month of each quarter. The index tracks movement in the cost of
  labor, including wages, fringe benefits and bonuses for employees at all
  levels of a company. We are using the wage component of this index.

## **Benchmark Descriptions**

- U.S. Aggregate Bond: The Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index measures the performance of USD-denominated, SEC-registered, investmentgrade, fixed-rate or step up, taxable bonds. The index includes bonds from the Treasury, Government-Related, Corporate and MBS, ABS, and CMBS sectors. Securities included in the index must have at least one year until final maturity.
- U.S. Treasury: The Barclays Capital U.S. Treasury Index measures the performance of public obligations of the U.S. Treasury with a remaining maturity of one year or more.
- U.S. Agency: The Barclays Capital U.S. Agency Bond Index measures the
  performance of the agency sector of the U.S. government bond market
  and is comprised of investment-grade USD-denominated debentures
  issued by government and government-related agencies, including
  FNMA. The index includes both callable and non-callable securities that are
  publicly issued by U.S. government agencies, quasi- federal corporations,
  and corporate and foreign debt guaranteed by the U.S. government.
- U.S. Corporate: The Barclays Capital U.S. Corporate Bond Index measures
  the performance of publicly issued USD-denominated corporate and Yankee
  debentures and secured notes that meet specified maturity, liquidity, and
  quality requirements.
- U.S. MBS: The Barclays Capital U.S. Mortgage Backed Securities Index measures the performance of mortgage-backed pass-through securities of Ginnie Mae (GNMA), Fannie Mae (FNMA), and Freddie Mac (FHLMC).
- U.S. Municipal Bond: The Barclays Capital Municipal Bond Index measures the performance of the USD-denominated, investment grade, fixedrate tax exempt bond market. The index has four main sectors: state and local general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, insured bonds and prerefunded bonds. Securities included in the index must have at least one year until final maturity.
- General Obligation Bond Index: The Barclays General Obligation Bond Index measures the average market-weighted performance of general obligations securities that have been issued in the last five years with maturities greater than one year.
- Revenue Bond Index: The Barclays Revenue Bond Index measures the average market- weighted performance of revenue backed securities that have been issued in the last five years with maturities greater than one year.
- Investment Style: Performance of different types of stocks will vary over time. A common way to characterize a stock is by market capitalization (e.g., large cap or small cap) or style (e.g., value or growth).

- Large Cap vs. Small Cap: Large companies tend to be more established companies and therefore exhibit lower volatility. Over an extended period of time, expected returns of small cap companies are often higher due to the risks associated with smaller, less established companies.
- Value vs. Growth: Value companies typically trade at discount valuations and may pay a dividend. Growth companies are those that are experiencing greater earnings growth prospects.
- Mega Cap: The Russell Top 50 Index measures the performance of the top 50 largest companies in the Russell 1000 Index, which represents approximately 40% of the total market capitalization of the Russell 1000 index.
- Large Cap: The Russell Top 200 Index measures the performance of the 200 largest companies in the Russell 1000 Index, which represents approximately 68% of the total market capitalization of the Russell 1000 index.
- Mid Cap: The Russell Midcap Index measures the performance of the 800 smallest companies in the Russell 1000 Index, which represent approximately 36% of the total market capitalization of the Russell 1000 Index.
- Small Cap: The Russell 2000 Index measures the performance of the 2,000 smallest companies in the Russell 3000 Index, which represents approximately 8% of the total market capitalization of the Russell 3000 Index.
- Large Cap Growth: The Russell 1000 Growth Index measures the performance of those Russell 1000 index companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values.
- Large Cap Value: The Russell 1000 Value Index measures the performance of those Russell 1000 companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values.
- Mid Cap Growth: The Russell Midcap Growth Index measures the performance of those Russell Midcap companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values.
- Mid Cap Value: The Russell Midcap Value Index measures the performance of those Russell Midcap companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values.
- Small Cap Growth: The Russell 2000 Growth Index measures the performance of those Russell 2000 Index companies with higher price-to-value ratios and higher forecasted growth values.
- Small Cap Value: The Russell 2000 Value Index measures the performance of those Russell 2000 Index companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values.



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