

Wealth Strategies Group, LLC

As expected, The Fed raised rates last week 0.25% and the markets reacted to the increase with a move upward, the S&P gained 6.16% for the week (-6.36% YTD)¹. Comments from the meeting show a more hawkish attitude with rates going forward as expectations for increases at each of the 6 meetings this year of at least 0.25% each with some Fed presidents calling for early 0.50% raises to tame inflation ^{2, 3, 4}. In other news,

credit reporting agencies are making adjustments after months of research, removing some 70% of medical debt from credit reports noting "Medical collections debt often arises from unforeseen medical circumstances."⁵

Welcome to Spring! OK, I know I said that last week with the beginning of Daylight Savings Time but, as of Sunday, March 20, we are now *OFFICIALLY* in the spring season. And we are nearly at the end of the first quarter of 2022. Hopefully you have gotten through tax season, or at least have all your documentation ready to go. Make sure to discuss 2022 projections with your tax advisor to see if any adjustments to withholding or estimated taxes need to be considered. As the weather warms and covid numbers continue to decline, I hope you are getting back outside and seeing some sort of "return to normal". I am sure we are all getting tired of living through historical events!

---Chuck

This Week's Inspiration/Activity:

"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best. Strive for excellence, not perfection."

Musician, Jackson Brown

Your action for this week is to stop comparing yourself to others and judge yourself based on your efforts instead.

This Week in History:

March 22, 1934 -- The first Masters golf championships tees off in Augusta, Georgia. Horton Smith would go on to win the tournament, finishing four under par with scores of 70-72-70-72. Craig Wood (-3), Paul Runyan (-2) and Billy Burke (-2) were the only other golfers to finish under par⁶.

¹ See update below

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/feds-bostic-sees-6-rate-hikes-this-year-risks-war-2022-03-21/>

³ <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/18/fed-governor-waller-says-half-point-rate-hikes-could-be-needed-to-tame-inflation.html>

⁴ <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/18/st-louis-feds-bullard-says-the-central-bank-should-raise-rates-above-3percent-this-year.html>

⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/19/business/credit-reporting-agencies-medical-debt/index.html>

⁶ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/first-masters-golf-tournament>

In this week's recap: Stocks rally in the face of a changing landscape.

Weekly Economic Update

Presented by Charles D. Vercellone, ChFC®, AIF®, March 21, 2022

THE WEEK ON WALL STREET

With the Fed embarking on a new course of monetary tightening amid continued fighting in Ukraine, stocks staged a powerful, broad-based rally last week.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 5.49%, while the Standard & Poor's 500 gained 6.16%. The Nasdaq Composite index soared 8.18% for the week. The MSCI EAFE index, which tracks developed overseas stock markets, advanced 5.17%.^{1,2,3}

STOCKS ROAR

After surrendering gains on Monday, stocks surged higher for four consecutive days. The rally was propelled by strong economic data, the outcome of last week's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting, and reports that Russia made interest payments on its sovereign debt, avoiding technical default.

The uptrend began with a drop in oil prices and a lighter-than-expected wholesale inflation report. Stock prices initially buckled following Wednesday's hawkish FOMC announcement, but turned higher as investors interpreted the Fed's news as a welcome plan to combat inflation. Stocks extended their gains into the final two trading sessions, cementing their best weekly performance since November 2020.⁴

THE FED'S PLAN

For the first time since 2018, the Federal Reserve hiked the federal funds rate, increasing it by 0.25% and signaling that it expected to raise rates at a faster pace than originally outlined in December. Based on its projections of future fed fund rates, the Fed may implement seven quarter-point rate hikes this year and another three to four next year.⁵

In a statement following the FOMC meeting, Fed officials expressed rising concerns over inflationary pressures made more acute by the war in Ukraine. Members also indicated that they would soon announce a plan to reduce the Fed's \$9 trillion balance sheet.⁶

TIP OF THE WEEK



*Use your phone or camera to take a video of your home and your belongings.
Keep it in a safe place. It may come in handy someday.*

THE WEEK AHEAD: KEY ECONOMIC DATA

Wednesday: New Home Sales.

Thursday: Jobless Claims. Durable Goods Orders. Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) Composite Flash.

Friday: Consumer Sentiment.

Source: Econoday, March 18, 2022

The Econoday economic calendar lists upcoming U.S. economic data releases (including key economic indicators), Federal Reserve policy meetings, and speaking engagements of Federal Reserve officials. The content is developed from sources believed to be providing accurate information. The forecasts or forward-looking statements are based on assumptions and may not materialize. The forecasts also are subject to revision.

THE WEEK AHEAD: COMPANIES REPORTING EARNINGS

Monday: Nike, Inc. (NKE).

Tuesday: Adobe, Inc. (ADBE).

Wednesday: General Mills, Inc. (GIS).

Source: Zacks, March 18, 2022

Companies mentioned are for informational purposes only. It should not be considered a solicitation for the purchase or sale of the securities. Investing involves risks, and investment decisions should be based on your own goals, time horizon, and tolerance for risk. The return and principal value of investments will fluctuate as market conditions change. When sold, investments may be worth more or less than their original cost. Companies may reschedule when they report earnings without notice.

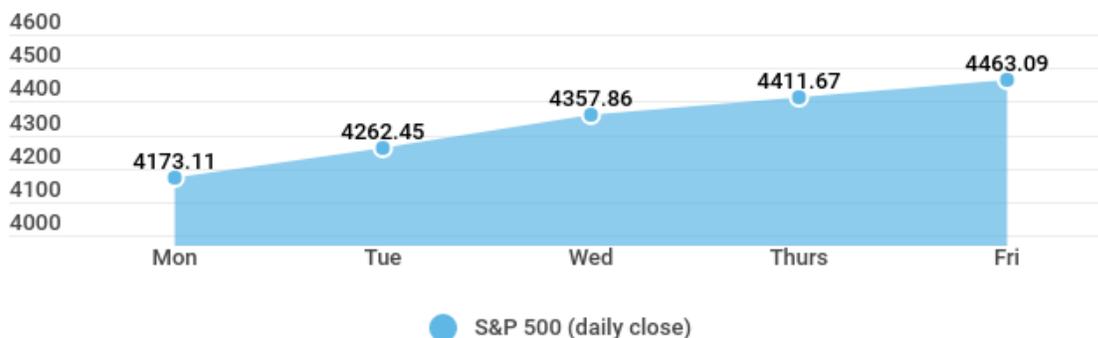
QUOTE OF THE WEEK



*“Everything must be taken into account. If the fact will not fit
the theory — let the theory go.”*

AGATHA CHRISTIE

Market Index	Close	Week	Y-T-D
DJIA	34,754.21	+5.49%	-4.36%
NASDAQ	13,893.84	+8.18%	-11.19%
MSCI-EAFE	2,149.68	+5.17%	-7.98%
S&P 500	4,463.09	+6.16%	-6.36%



Treasury	Close	Week	Y-T-D
10-Year Note	2.14%	+0.14%	+0.62%

Sources: The Wall Street Journal, March 18, 2022; Treasury.gov, March 18, 2022

Weekly performance for the Dow Jones Industrial Average, Standard & Poor's 500 Index, and NASDAQ Composite Index is measured from the close of trading on Friday, March 11, to Friday, March 18, close. Weekly performance for the MSCI-EAFE is measured from Friday, March 11, open to Thursday, March 17, close. Weekly and year-to-date 10-year Treasury note yield are expressed in basis points.

THE WEEKLY RIDDLE



Two lawyers sit at opposite ends of a large conference table. Nothing is in between them but the table, yet they don't see each other. How is this possible?

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: You are at sea, it is mid-July, and your ship has reached a unique spot on earth. If you sail north, it will be summer; if you sail south, it will be winter. If you sail east, it will be Friday, but if you sail west, it will be Saturday. Precisely where in the world are you? (Hint: your ship is in the Pacific Ocean, near the island nation of Kiribati.)

ANSWER: You are at the intersection of the International Date Line and the Equator.

Know someone who could use information like this?

Please feel free to send us their contact information via phone or email. (Don't worry – we'll request their permission before adding them to our mailing list.)

Investing involves risks, and investment decisions should be based on your own goals, time horizon, and tolerance for risk. The return and principal value of investments will fluctuate as market conditions change. When sold, investments may be worth more or less than their original cost.

The forecasts or forward-looking statements are based on assumptions, may not materialize, and are subject to revision without notice.

The market indexes discussed are unmanaged, and generally, considered representative of their respective markets. Index performance is not indicative of the past performance of a particular investment. Indexes do not incur management fees, costs, and expenses. Individuals cannot directly invest in unmanaged indexes. Past performance does not guarantee future results.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average is an unmanaged index that is generally considered representative of large-capitalization companies on the U.S. stock market. Nasdaq Composite is an index of the common stocks and similar securities listed on the NASDAQ stock market and is considered a broad indicator of the performance of technology and growth companies. The MSCI EAFE Index was created by Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) and serves as a benchmark of the performance of major international equity markets, as represented by 21 major MSCI indexes from Europe, Australia, and Southeast Asia. The S&P 500 Composite Index is an unmanaged group of securities that are considered to be representative of the stock market in general.

U.S. Treasury Notes are guaranteed by the federal government as to the timely payment of principal and interest. However, if you sell a Treasury Note prior to maturity, it may be worth more or less than the original price paid. Fixed income investments are subject to various risks including changes in interest rates, credit quality, inflation risk, market valuations, prepayments, corporate events, tax ramifications and other factors.

International investments carry additional risks, which include differences in financial reporting standards, currency exchange rates, political risks unique to a specific country, foreign taxes and regulations, and the potential for illiquid markets. These factors may result in greater share price volatility.

Please consult your financial professional for additional information.

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CITATIONS:

1. The Wall Street Journal, March 18, 2022
2. The Wall Street Journal, March 18, 2022
3. The Wall Street Journal, March 18, 2022
4. CNBC, March 18, 2022
5. The Wall Street Journal, March 16, 2022
6. The Wall Street Journal, March 16, 2022

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