MARKET MONITOR

with Alphastar's Chief Investment Officer,
Tony Parish, CFA®, CQF

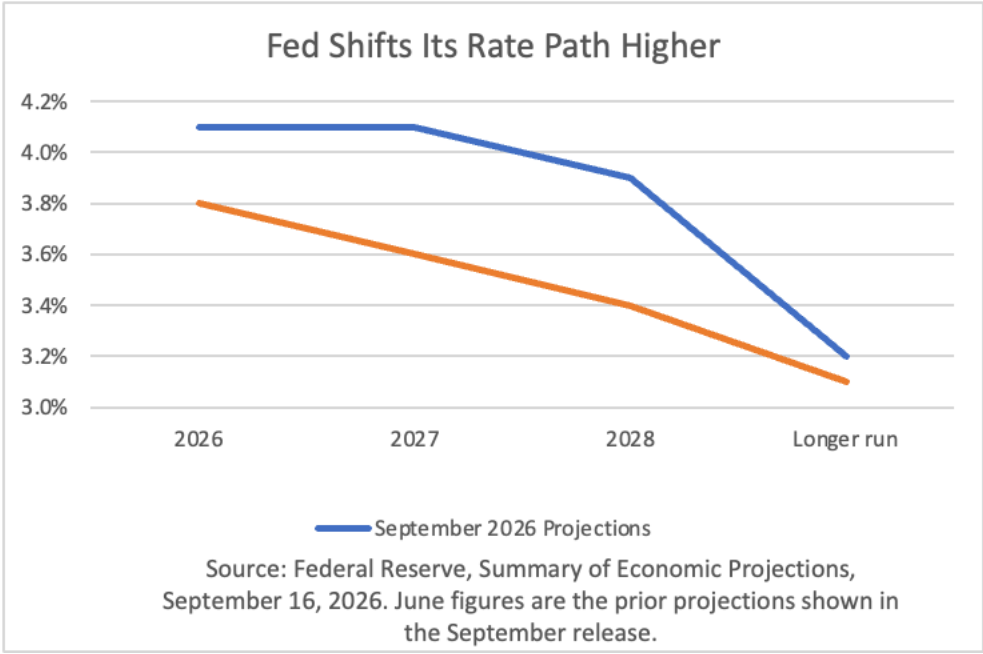
> **Higher rates** are not the **enemy.**
>
> -TONY PARISH

U.S. stocks delivered mixed results last week as investors digested the Federal Reserve's first rate hike since 2023. The S&P 500 slipped fractionally for a second consecutive week, the Dow fell 1.6%, and the Nasdaq finished slightly higher. Growth stocks outperformed value, reminding investors that rising rates do not automatically derail equity markets when economic growth and corporate earnings remain healthy.

As expected, the Federal Reserve raised its benchmark interest rate by 0.25%, bringing the target range to 3.75%-4.00%. More important than the hike itself was the Fed's commentary. Policymakers signaled that inflation remains a priority and indicated that another increase before year-end remains the most likely path.

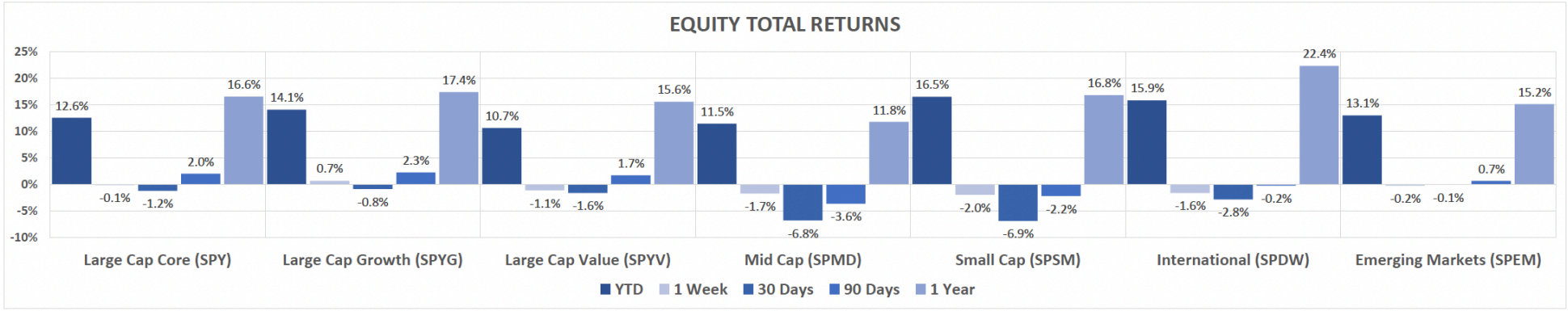
Bond yields moved higher following the Fed's announcement, particularly at the short end of the curve. The 2-year Treasury yield rose to 4.76%, while the 10-year Treasury finished just above 5.0%. Higher yields create headwinds for borrowers, but they also provide investors with income opportunities that have been largely absent for much of the past decade.

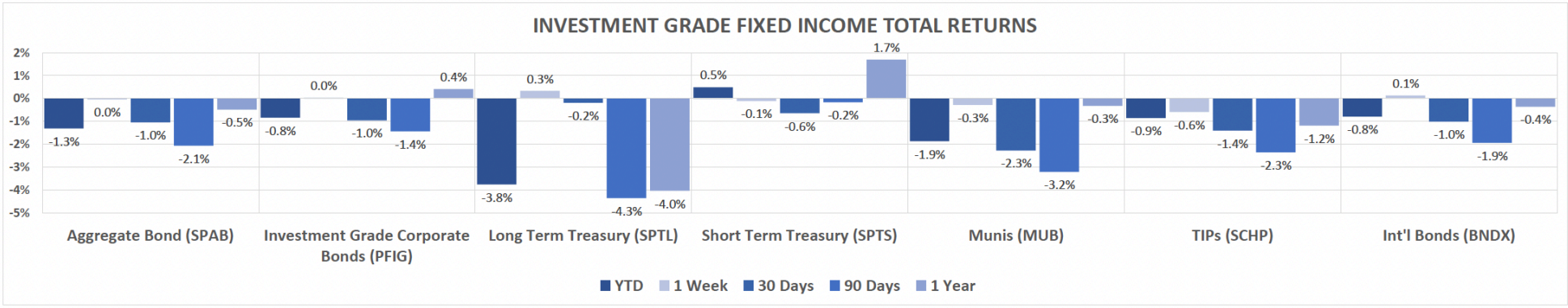
Energy markets remained volatile, with crude oil briefly climbing above $106 per barrel before retreating below $100 by week's end. Elevated oil prices, a stronger U.S. dollar, and rising mortgage rates may continue to pressure consumers; however, resilient spending and a healthy labor market continue to support the broader economy. **For investors, the key takeaway is** that the economic backdrop remains constructive. While the Fed appears committed to keeping policy restrictive until inflation returns closer to target, strong earnings growth and steady consumer demand suggest that market volatility is more likely to reflect policy uncertainty than a deterioration in fundamentals.

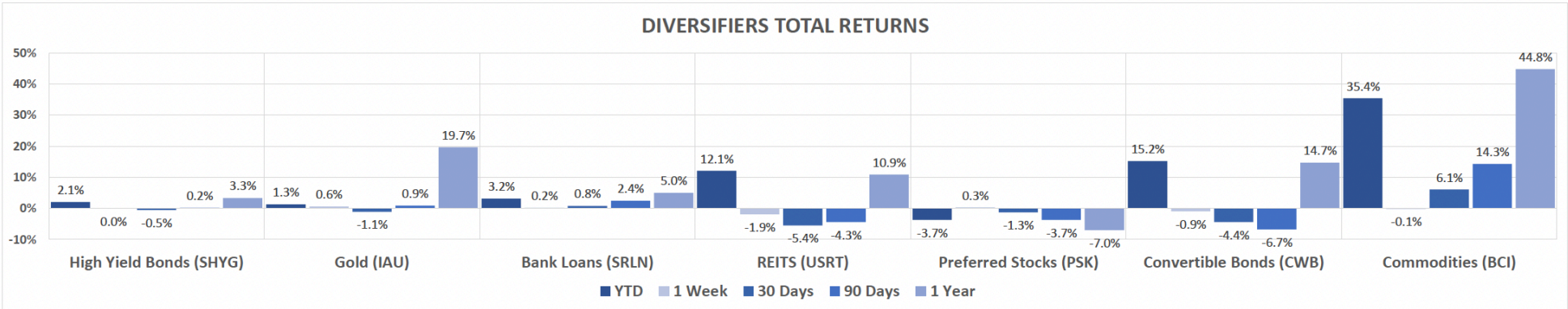


Source: Federal Reserve, Summary of Economic Projections, September 16, 2026. June figures are the prior projections shown in the September release.

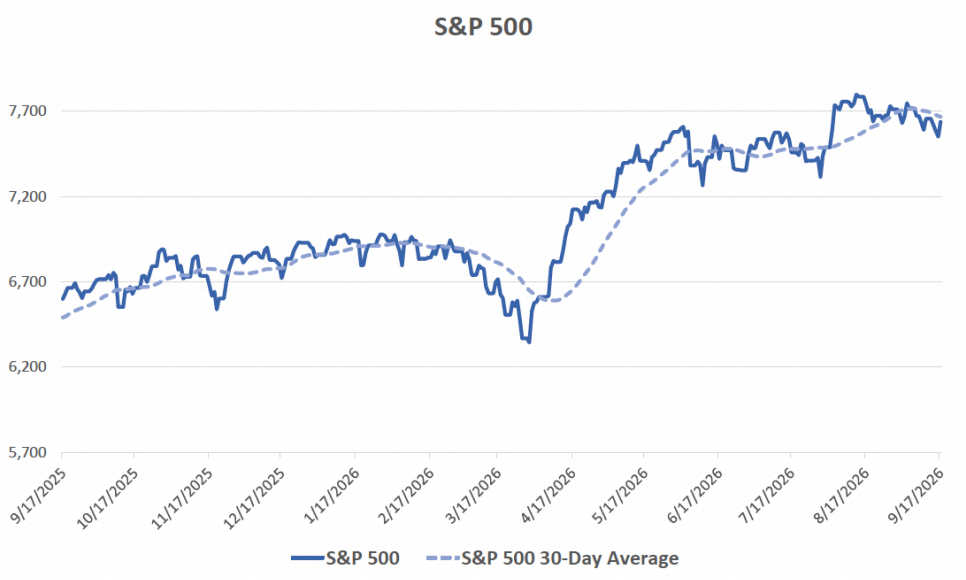
Highlights & Performance Data

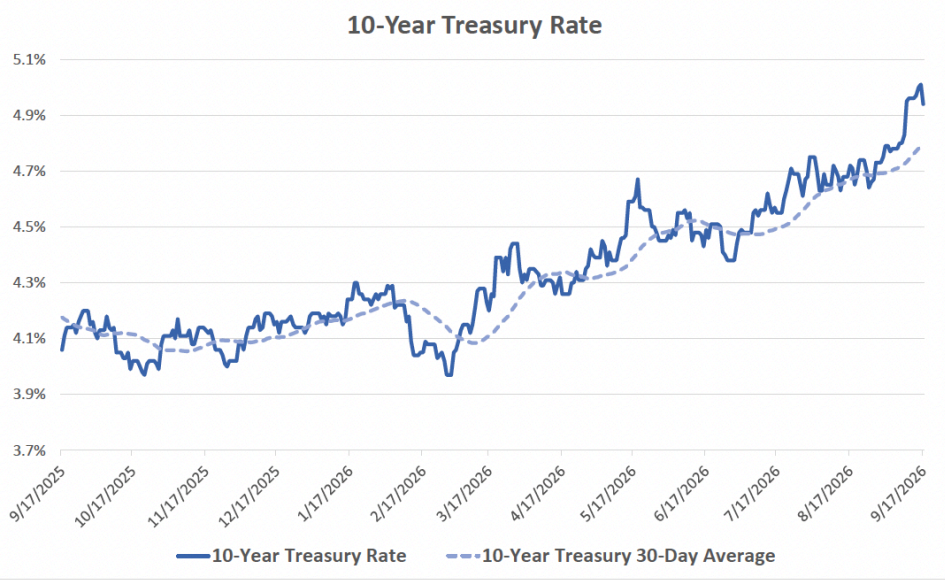


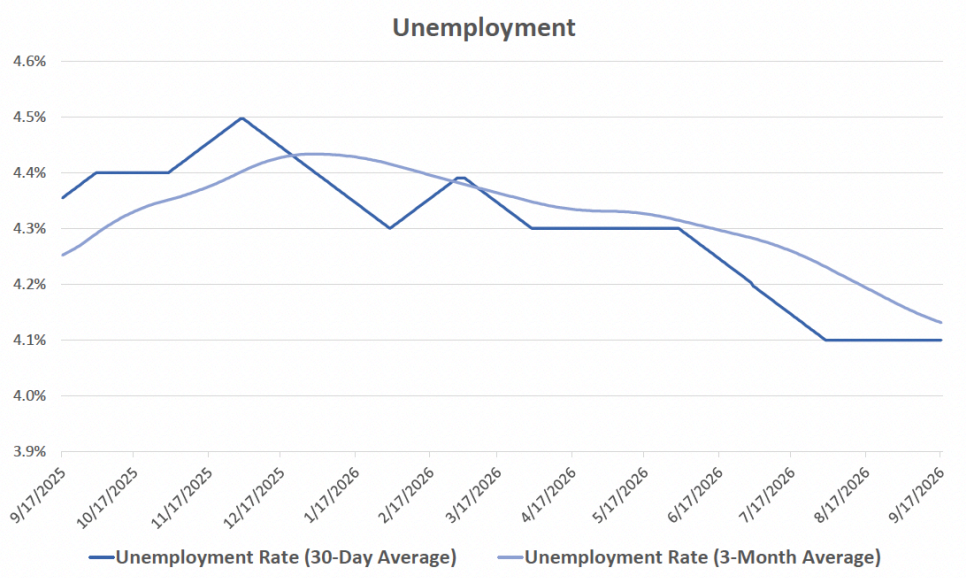


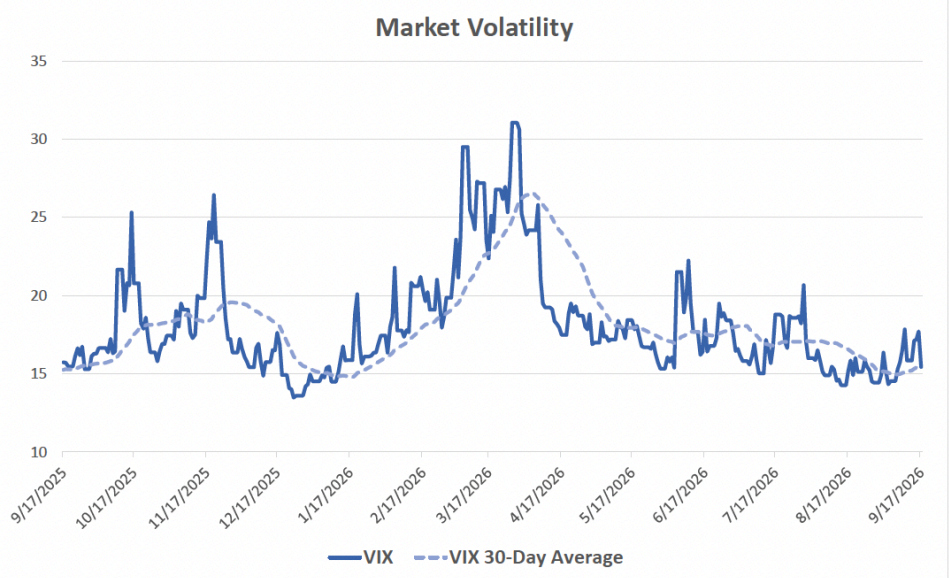


Markets & Economic Indicators









alphastar CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

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[1] Source: Performance information provided by Morningstar. [2] Market and Economic data sourced from the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis FRED database.

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See Glossary of Terms & Citations on pages 5-6 for more information.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS & CITATIONS

S&P 500
- S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, S&P 500 [SP500], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SP500

Dow Jones Industrial Average
- S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, Dow Jones Industrial Average [DJIA], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DJIA

NASDAQ Composite Index
- NASDAQ OMX Group, NASDAQ Composite Index [NASDAQCOM], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/NASDAQCOM

Russell 2000® Price Index
- Wilshire US Small-Cap Price Index [WILLSMLCAPPR], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/WILLSMLCAPPR

CBOE Volatility Index: VIX
- Chicago Board Options Exchange, CBOE Volatility Index: VIX [VIXCLS], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/VIXCLS

10-Year Treasury Constant Maturity Rate
- Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (US), 10-Year Treasury Constant Maturity Rate [DGS10], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DGS10

Effective Federal Funds Rate
- Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (US), Effective Federal Funds Rate [DFF], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DFF

ICE BofAML US High Yield Master II Option-Adjusted Spread
- ICE Benchmark Administration Limited (IBA), ICE BofAML US High Yield Master II Option-Adjusted Spread [BAMLH0A0HYM2], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/BAMLH0A0HYM2

Moody's Seasoned Aaa Corporate Bond Yield
- Moody's, Moody's Seasoned Aaa Corporate Bond Yield [DAAA], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DAAA

10-Year Treasury Constant Maturity Minus 2-Year Treasury Constant Maturity
- Series is calculated as the spread between 10-Year Treasury Constant Maturity (https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DGS10) and 2-Year Treasury Constant Maturity (https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DGS2)

10-Year Breakeven Inflation Rate
- The breakeven inflation rate represents a measure of expected inflation derived from 10-Year Treasury Constant Maturity Securities (https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DGS10) and 10-Year Treasury Inflation-Indexed Constant Maturity Securities (https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DFII10). The latest value implies what market participants expect inflation to be in the next 10 years, on average.

Trade Weighted U.S. Dollar Index: Major Currencies, Goods
- A weighted average of the foreign exchange value of the U.S. dollar against a subset of the broad index currencies that circulate widely outside the country of issue. Major currencies index includes the Euro Area, Canada, Japan, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia, and Sweden. For more information about trade-weighted indexes see http://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/bulletin/2005/winter05_index.pdf.

Crude Oil Prices: West Texas Intermediate (WTI) - Cushing, Oklahoma
- Definitions, Sources and Explanatory Notes: http://www.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/TblDefs/pet_pri_spt_tbldef2.asp. U.S. Energy Information Administration, Crude Oil Prices: West Texas Intermediate (WTI)- Cushing, Oklahoma [DCOILWTICO], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DCOILWTICO

Global Commodity Prices
- International Monetary Fund, Global Price Index of All Commodities [PALLFNFINDEXM], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/PALLFNFINDEXM

Real Gross Domestic Product (A191RL1Q225SBEA)
- Gross domestic product (GDP) is the value of the goods and services produced by the nation's economy less the value of the goods and services used up in production. GDP is also equal to the sum of personal consumption expenditures, gross private domestic investment, net exports of goods and services, and government consumption expenditures and gross investment. Real values are inflation-adjusted estimates—that is, estimates that exclude the effects of price changes.

Civilian Unemployment Rate
- The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed as a percentage of the labor force. Labor force data are restricted to people 16 years of age and older, who currently reside in 1 of the 50 states or the District of Columbia, who do not reside i n institutions (e.g., penal and mental facilities, homes for the aged), and who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS & CITATIONS *(CONTD.)*

Median CPI

- Median Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of core inflation calculated the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland and the Ohio State University. Median CPI was created as a different way to get a 'Core CPI' measure, or a better measure of underlying inflation trends. To calculate the Median CPI, the Cleveland Fed analyzes the median price change of the goods and services published by the BLS. The median price change is the price change that's right in the middle of the long list of all of the price changes. This series excludes 49.5% of the CPI components with the highest and lowest one -month price changes from each tail of the price-change distribution resulting in a Median CPI Inflation Estimate. According to research from the Cleveland Fed, the Median CPI provides a better signal of the inflation trend than either the all-items CPI or the CPI excluding food and energy. According to newer research done at the Cleveland Fed, the Median CPI is even better at PCE inflation in the near and longer term than the core PCE. For further information, go to https://www.clevelandfed.org/en/our-research/indicators-and-data/median-cpi.aspx

S&P/Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index

- S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, S&P/Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index [CSUSHPINSA], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CSUSHPINSA

30-Year Fixed Rate Mortgage Average in the United States

- Freddie Mac, 30-Year Fixed Rate Mortgage Average in the United States [MORTGAGE30US], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank Of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MORTGAGE30US

Industrial Production Index

- The Industrial Production Index (INDPRO) is an economic indicator that measures real output for all facilities located in the United States manufacturing, mining, and electric, and gas utilities (excluding those in U.S. territories).

Fed Balance Sheet Assets

- Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (US), Assets: Total Assets: Total Assets (Less Eliminations from Consolidation): Wednesday Level [WALCL], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/WALCL

Inflation Expectations (U of Michigan)

- Median expected price change next 12 months, Surveys of Consumers. The most recent value is not shown due to an agreement with the source. Surveys of Consumers, University of Michigan, University of Michigan: Inflation Expectation© [MICH], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MICH

Velocity of M2 Money Stock

- Calculated as the ratio of quarterly nominal GDP (https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/GDP) to the quarterly average of M2 money stock (https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/M2SL)

Housing Starts: Total: New Privately Owned Housing Units Started

- As provided by the Census, start occurs when excavation begins for the footings or foundation of a building. All housing units in a multifamily building are defined as being started when this excavation begins. Beginning with data for September 1992, estimates of housing starts include units in structures being totally rebuilt on an existing foundation.

University of Michigan: Consumer Sentiment

- Surveys of Consumers, University of Michigan, University of Michigan: Consumer Sentiment© [UMCSENT], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/UMCSENT/

Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate

- The series comes from the 'Current Population Survey (Household Survey), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate [CIVPART], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CIVPA R

4-Week Moving Average of Initial Claims

- U.S. Employment and Training Administration, 4-Week Moving Average of Initial Claims [IC4WSA], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/IC4WSA

Commercial and Industrial Loans, All Commercial Banks Annual Percent Change

- Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (US), Commercial and Industrial Loans, All Commercial Banks [CILACBQ158SBOG], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CILACBQ158SBOG

Delinquency Rate on Credit Card Loans, All Commercial Banks

- Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (US), Delinquency Rate on Credit Card Loans, All Commercial Banks [DRCCLACBS], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/DRCCLACBS