# Weekly Vantage Point

March 18, 2019

## Strongest Weekly Gain this Year

March 11-15, 2019 Recap

- Best Week Since November. U.S. stocks advanced on Friday, extending an already strong week, as
  global investors welcomed stimulus confirmation that China will reduce its value-added taxes. Led by gains
  in technology companies, the S&P 500 capped its best week since November 30, ending at new 2019
  high. Trading was volatile and volumes surged on Friday amid the simultaneous expiration of futures and
  options on both indexes and stocks (quadruple witching).
- Weekly Performance. For the week, the S&P 500 advanced 2.95%, the Dow Industrials gained 1.57% and the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite surged 3.81%. The S&P 500 has posted weekly gains in ten of the past twelve weeks, rallying 20.86% since Monday, December 24.
- Consumer Sentiment Improves. The University of Michigan's preliminary reading of March consumer sentiment advanced to the highest level this year, widely topping projections. Also positive, the report showed current conditions increased and expectations rose to the highest since October.
- **Technology Performed Best.** All 11 major sectors posted weekly gains, led by Technology (+4.89%), Healthcare (+3.29%) and Energy (+3.23%). Materials (+1.72%) and Industrials (+0.31%) rose the least.
- Treasurys Yields Retreat. Treasury prices rallied last week, sending the yield on 10-year notes down 4.1 basis points, ending the week at 2.589%, its second lowest yield this year. The U.S. Dollar Index weakened by 0.73% last week, while West Texas crude oil gained 4.37% to \$58.52/barrel, near its highest level since mid-November.

## What We're Reading

**Busy New Week** 

**Fed Meeting Outlook** 

**Delaying Brexit Scenarios** 

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## Week's Economic Calendar

**Monday, March 18:** Housing Market Index:

**Tuesday, March 19:** Durable & Capital Goods Orders, Factory Orders;

Wednesday, March 20: FOMC Rate & Policy Decisions;

**Thursday, March 21:** Philadelphia Fed Business Outlook, Jobless Claims, Leading Indicators;

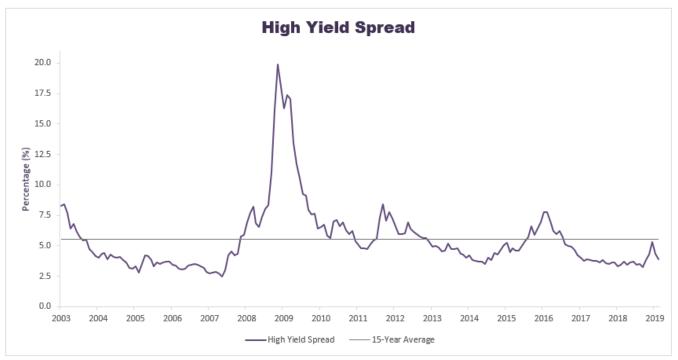
**Friday, March 22:** Markit Manufacturing & Service Activity, Wholesale Inventories & Sales, Existing Home Sales.

## **Market Watch**

| Stocks                      | 1-Week | MTD   | 3-Month | YTD   | 1-Year | 3-Year |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------|---------|-------|--------|--------|
| Dow Jones Industrial Avg.   | 1.57   | -0.26 | 7.25    | 10.81 | 3.92   | 14.44  |
| S&P 500                     | 2.95   | 1.46  | 9.14    | 13.11 | 4.81   | 14.18  |
| NASDAQ Composite            | 3.81   | 2.13  | 11.58   | 16.16 | 3.89   | 18.94  |
| Russell 3000                | 2.84   | 1.10  | 9.55    | 13.64 | 4.42   | 14.32  |
| MSCI EAFE                   | 2.80   | 1.07  | 8.49    | 10.46 | -5.00  | 7.86   |
| MSCI Emerging Markets       | 2.66   | 0.68  | 9.31    | 9.74  | -10.92 | 12.78  |
| Bonds                       | 1-Week | MTD   | 3-Month | YTD   | 1-Year | 3-Year |
| Barclays Agg Bond           | 0.23   | 0.71  | 2.65    | 1.72  | 3.73   | 2.02   |
| Barclays Municipal          | 0.17   | 0.50  | 2.52    | 1.80  | 4.57   | 2.58   |
| Barclays US Corp High Yield | 0.73   | 0.31  | 4.34    | 6.59  | 5.00   | 8.60   |
| Commodities                 | 1-Week | MTD   | 3-Month | YTD   | 1-Year | 3-Year |
| Bloomberg Commodity         | 1.44   | 0.34  | 1.01    | 6.87  | -4.53  | 2.41   |
| S&P GSCI Crude Oil          | 4.64   | 2.80  | 14.28   | 29.53 | -3.97  | 15.61  |
| S&P GSCI Gold               | 0.53   | -0.55 | 5.44    | 2.15  | -1.10  | 2.03   |

Source: Morningstar

## Chart of the Week: High Yield Spreads Have Narrowed



Source: Cetera Investment Management, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, BofAML. Data as of 3/13/2019.

The high yield bond spread, which is a measure of the spread between high yield bonds and Treasuries, has drifted lower this year to about 3.9%. In early January, the high yield spread was around 5.4%. This pullback in spreads is notable because spreads widened significantly in the fourth quarter 2018 during the sell-off of equity risk assets. This quarter, however, the spread narrowed, signaling more willingness from investors to add risk.

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#### **Glossary**

The **Dow Jones Industrial Average** is a price-weighted average of 30 significant stocks traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the NASDAQ.

The **S&P 500** is an index of 500 stocks chosen for market size, liquidity and industry grouping (among other factors) designed to be a leading indicator of U.S. equities and is meant to reflect the risk/return characteristics of the large cap universe.

The **NASDAQ Composite Index** includes all domestic and international based common type stocks listed on The NASDAQ Stock Market. The NASDAQ Composite Index is a broad based index

The **Russell 3000 Index** measures the performance of the largest 3,000 U.S. companies representing approximately 98% of the investable U.S. equity market.

The **Bloomberg Barclays US Aggregate Bond Index**, which was originally called the Lehman Aggregate Bond Index, is a broad based flagship benchmark that measures the investment grade, US dollar-denominated, fixed-rate taxable bond market. The index includes Treasuries, government—related and corporate debt securities, MBS (agency fixed-rate and hybrid ARM pass-throughs), ABS and CMBS (agency and non-agency) debt securities that are rated at least Baa3 by Moody's and BBB- by S&P. Taxable municipals, including Build America bonds and a small amount of foreign bonds traded in U.S. markets are also included. Eligible bonds must have at least one year until final maturity, but in practice the index holdings has a fluctuating average life of around 8.25 years. This total return index, created in 1986 with history backfilled to January 1, 1976, is unhedged and rebalances monthly.

The **Bloomberg Barclays US Corporate High Yield Index** measures the USD-denominated, non-investment grade, fixed-rate, taxable corporate bond market. Securities are classified as high yield if the middle rating of Moody's, Fitch, and S&P is Ba1/BB+/BB+ or below, excluding emerging market debt. Payment-in-kind and bonds with predetermined step-up coupon provisions are also included. Eligible securities must have at least one year until final maturity, but in practice the index holdings has a fluctuating average life of around 6.3 years. This total return unhedged index was created in 1986, with history backfilled to July 1, 1983 and rebalances monthly.

The **Bloomberg Barclays US Municipal Bond Index** covers the USD-denominated long-term tax exempt bond market. The index has four main sectors: state and local general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, insured bonds, and prerefunded bonds. Many of the subindicies of the Municipal Index have historical data to January 1980. In addition, several subindicies based on maturity and revenue source have been created, some with inception dates after January 1980, but no later than July 1, 1993. Eligible securities must be rated investment grade (Baa3/BBB- or higher) by Moody's and S&P and have at least one year until final maturity, but in practice the index holdings has a fluctuating average life of around 12.8 years. This total return index is unhedged and rebalances monthly

The **MSCI EAFE Index** is designed to measure the equity market performance of developed markets (Europe, Australasia, Far East) excluding the U.S. and Canada. The Index is market-capitalization weighted.

The **MSCI Emerging Markets Index** is designed to measure equity market performance in global emerging markets. It is a float-adjusted market capitalization index.

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The **Bloomberg Commodity Index** is a broadly diversified index that measures 22 exchange-traded futures on physical commodities in five groups (energy, agriculture, industrial metals, precious metals, and livestock), which are weighted to account for economic significance and market liquidity. No single commodity can comprise less than 2% or more than 15% of the index; and no group can represent more than 33% of the index. However, between rebalancings, group weightings may fluctuate to levels outside the limits. The index rebalances annually, weighted 2/3 by trading volume and 1/3 by world production.

The **S&P GSCI Crude Oil Index** is a sub-index of the S&P GSCI, provides investors with a reliable and publicly available benchmark for investment performance in the crude oil market.

The **S&P GSCI Gold Index**, a sub-index of the S&P GSCI, provides investors with a reliable and publicly available benchmark tracking the COMEX gold futures market.

**West Texas Intermediate (WTI)** is a crude oil stream produced in Texas and southern Oklahoma which serves as a reference or "marker" for pricing a number of other crude streams. WTI is the underlying commodity of the New York Mercantile Exchange's oil futures contracts

The **Choe Volatility Index**® **(VIX**®) is a key measure of market expectations of near-term volatility conveyed by S&P 500 stock index option prices.

The **U.S. Dollar Index** is a weighted geometric mean that provides a value measure of the United States dollar relative to a basket of major foreign currencies. The index, often carrying a USDX or DXY moniker, started in March 1973, beginning with a value of the U.S. Dollar Index at 100.000. It has since reached a February 1985 high of 164.720, and has been as low as 70.698 in March 2008.