

EAGLE FOCUS

weekly

March 17, 2025

MARKET PERFORMANCE RECAP

WEEK ENDING
March 14, 2025

INDEX	LAST FRIDAY'S CLOSE	% CHANGE YTD
S&P 500	5638.94	-4.13%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	41488.19	-2.48%
Nasdaq Composite	17754.09	-8.06%
S&P MidCap 400	2927.15	-6.21%
Russell 2000	2048.53	-8.34%

Mortgage rates have hit a five-month low, attracting more home buyers to the market. According to the Mortgage Bankers Association, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage reached its lowest level since October 2024, encouraging buyers to apply for loans. Purchase applications rose 7% from the previous week, while refinance activity jumped 16.2%. (Source: MarketWatch)



American consumers are facing economic pressures this year, from tariff concerns to inflation and recession fears, impacting spending across all income levels.

Walmart CEO Doug McMillon noted that budget-strapped shoppers are buying smaller pack sizes late in the month as their funds run low. Additionally, industry-wide, U.S. fast-food sales to low-income customers fell by double digits in Q4 compared to the previous year. (Source: Wall Street Journal)

Consumer prices rose less than expected in February, keeping inflation on a downward trend. CPI increased 0.2% versus a 0.3% forecast, with food and energy also up 0.2%. Core CPI, excluding food and energy, matched this rise, while shelter costs slowed slightly. Notable price gains were seen in used cars, household furnishings, and recreation. (Source: Ned Davis Research)

Market volatility and tariff uncertainty are delaying the expected investment banking rebound in 2025, Morgan Stanley analysts said Thursday. Deal activity in Q1 has been weaker than anticipated, leading to a subdued outlook for the first half of the year. A stronger pickup is expected in Q3. Despite challenges, analysts see a favorable dealmaking environment as antitrust enforcement returns to a more traditional approach. (Source: Reuters)

Jobless claims fell by 2,000 to 220,000 last week, signaling steady labor demand. Federal program claims dipped slightly to 1,580 but remain four times higher than a year ago due to federal workforce cuts. Continuing claims dropped 27,000 to 1.87 million, keeping the insured jobless rate at 1.2%, indicating a stable labor market. (Source: Ned Davis Research)

While actively managed ETFs and mutual funds lagged behind passive funds in 2024, fixed income was a standout exception. Morningstar's U.S. Active/Passive Barometer Report found that over 63% of active bond managers outperformed their passive counterparts, a 15-point improvement from 2023. All major fixed-income categories—intermediate core, corporate, and high-yield bonds—saw strong gains. (Source: Barron's)

CEO confidence in the Business Roundtable Economic Outlook fell 7.2 points to 84.0 in Q1, the biggest drop in nearly three years. The decline reflects growing caution, with weaker sales, capex, and hiring expectations. However, CEOs slightly lowered their 2025 GDP growth forecast to 2.5% from 2.6%. (Source: Ned Davis Research)

President Donald Trump's tariffs could raise material costs for a new home by up to \$10,000, according to the National Association of Home Builders. The trade group reports that builders estimate price increases between \$7,500 and \$10,000 for an average new single-family home. While a formal survey is forthcoming, this offers an early look at the potential impact of Trump's proposed levies on Canadian and Mexican imports. (Source: CNBC)

U.S. household wealth hit a record high at the end of 2024, driven by a stock market rally that has since lost momentum, according to Federal Reserve data. Household and nonprofit net worth rose by \$200 billion to \$169.4 trillion in Q4, as gains in equities offset declines in real estate. Stock market holdings grew by \$300 billion to \$56 trillion, while real estate values fell by \$400 billion to \$48.1 trillion. (Source: Reuters)

Venture capital dry powder in three- to five-year-old funds has hit levels unseen since 2008, PitchBook reports. Fueled by a 2020-2021 investment boom, these unspent funds now face limited deployment opportunities amid a market downturn, says Kyle Stanford, PitchBook's VC research director. Of the \$677 billion in global VC dry powder, 53% is held in funds aged three to five years. (Source: PitchBook)

The U.S. debt and deficit grew in President Donald Trump's first month, with the February budget shortfall exceeding \$1 trillion before the fiscal year's midpoint.

While government spending dipped slightly from the previous month, it still far outpaced revenue, the Treasury Department reported Wednesday. The monthly deficit reached \$307 billion, nearly 2.5 times January's level and 3.7% higher than a year ago. (Source: CNBC)

The Bank for International Settlements warns in a report from last Tuesday that private credit's push for retail investors increases liquidity risks similar to traditional banks.

While direct lenders match loans with fund durations, new structures allowing frequent redemptions could cause problems in market downturns. With \$2.5 trillion in assets, the sector faces regulatory scrutiny over valuation concerns, conflicts of interest, and risk exposure. (Source: Yahoo Finance)

A Vanguard report on retirement savings shows progress in helping American workers build financial security.

Auto-enrollment in retirement plans has risen from 36% a decade ago to 61%, boosting participation, especially among lower earners. Additionally, 45% of participants increased their savings rate in 2024, and more companies are setting higher default contribution rates. (Source: MarketWatch)

The IRS announced that over 1.1 million taxpayers have unclaimed refunds from 2021, with a deadline of April 15 to file. More than \$1 billion in refunds remain unclaimed, with a median refund of \$781. The total doesn't include the Recovery Rebate Credit or other applicable credits. (Source: Fox Business)**The phrase "piece of cake" to describe an easy task originated in a 1936 poem by Ogden Nash, where it was used to imply ease.**

It was later popularized by British Royal Air Force pilots during World War II to describe simple missions, though it's unclear why they chose cake over other desserts. While some believe the RAF coined the phrase, Nash's poem came first, making him the true originator. (Source: WordSmarts)

St. Patrick's Day parades actually began in America, with the first recorded one in 1601 in St. Augustine, Florida.

The event was organized by the Spanish colony's Irish vicar. Later, Irish soldiers in the English military marched in Boston in 1737 and New York City in 1762. The tradition grew in popularity across early American cities. (Source: History.com)

In 2008, all four No. 1 seeds—Kansas, Memphis, North Carolina, and UCLA—advanced to the Final Four, marking the only time in NCAA history that the top seeds met expectations.

No. 1 seeds are traditionally the strongest teams in the tournament, and since seeding began in 1979, 27 champions have come from this position, the most successful by far. (Source: Bola VIP)



Reproduction Prohibited without Express Permission. Eagle clients, and anyone receiving Eagle Focus Weekly directly or indirectly from an Eagle advisor, are not permitted to post Eagle Focus Weekly, either in whole or in part, to any publicly accessible website or social media site, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or a blog.

The statements, opinions and analysis in Eagle Focus Weekly are provided by Ned Davis Research, which is not affiliated with Eagle Strategies LLC nor any of its affiliates. These opinions and market conditions are subject to change without notice. Any past performance referenced does not guarantee future results. Information and statements that are forward looking are subject to certain risks and uncertainties. Indexes are unmanaged and you cannot invest directly in an index. Eagle is not responsible for the accuracy or completeness of information in this document.

Eagle Focus Weekly is intended for informational use only and is not investment advice nor an offer of any securities, products or services. Please contact your Eagle Investment Advisor Representative to discuss your investment objectives before making any investment decisions for your Eagle accounts.

Eagle Strategies LLC (Eagle) is an SEC-registered investment adviser. Registration with the SEC does not imply a certain level of skill or training. Eagle investment adviser representatives (IARs) act solely in their capacity as insurance agents of New York Life, its affiliates, or other unaffiliated insurance carriers when recommending insurance products and as registered representatives when recommending securities through NYLIFE Securities LLC (member FINRA/SIPC), an affiliated registered broker-dealer and licensed insurance agency. Eagle Strategies LLC and NYLIFE Securities LLC are New York Life Companies. Investment products are not guaranteed and may lose value. No tax or legal advice is provided by Eagle, its IARs or its affiliates.