

Year-End Spend

Equities maintained their upward movement during the holiday shortened week. The weekly return for the S&P 500 Index was +1.0%, the Dow was +1.3%, and the NASDAQ was +0.9%. All eleven sectors in the S&P 500 Index were positive for the week led by the Health Care, Consumer Staples, and Communication Services sectors. The 10-year U.S. Treasury note yield increased to 4.484% at Friday's close versus 4.441% the previous week.

The minutes of the November Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting indicated that while Federal Reserve officials agreed inflation was on the right path, they would not hesitate to raise rates again if data indicated that progress toward the 2% goal was insufficient. The next data point comes this week with the release of the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Price Index. Expectations for the FOMC to hold rates steady at the December meeting are currently 96.8%.

With 481 companies in the S&P 500 Index complete on third quarter earnings reporting, S&P 500 earnings are expected to grow by 7.1% year-over-year on revenue growth of 1.5% for the quarter. This is a substantial increase from the 1.6% earnings and 0.8% revenue growth forecasted at the start of the earnings reporting period. For full-year 2023, S&P 500 Index earnings are expected to grow by 2.6% on revenue growth of 2.0%.

In our *Dissecting Headlines* section, we look at the holiday shopping season.

Financial Market Update

	Weekly Return	YTD Return		Weekly Return	YTD Return
S&P 500 Index	1.0%	20.5%	Aggregate Bond Index	-0.1%	1.2%
Dow Jones Industrial Average	1.3%	8.6%	U.S. Dollar Index	-0.5%	-0.1%
NASDAQ 100	0.9%	47.2%	WTI Crude Oil	-0.5%	-5.9%
Russell 2000 (Small Cap Index)	0.6%	4.0%	Gold	1.1%	9.7%
International Stocks (MSCI ex-US)	0.9%	9.7%	Real Estate (US REIT Index)	1.0%	-1.9%

Sources: S&P Global, Thomson Reuters

Dissecting Headlines: Holiday Shopping

Based on data from Mastercard Spending Pulse, Black Friday shopping was 2.5% higher year-over-year. There was a clear divide between online shopping which increased 8.5% and in-store sales which increased 1.1%. Today is Cyber Monday and it is also expected to be an active shopping day.

The National Retail Federation's (NRF) holiday spending forecast expects spending in November and December should grow 3% to 4% year-over-year to the \$957.3 to \$966.6 billion range. This is the lowest growth rate since the 1.7% growth in 2018. It trails 2022's 5.4% growth, 2021's 12.1% growth, and 2020's 9.1% growth. The NRF's measurement period is November 1st to December 31st, but 43% of shoppers surveyed say they start their holiday shopping before November to spread out their budget, avoid last minute shopping, and avoid crowds.

Online shopping continues to outpace overall shopping with a 7% to 9% increase forecast for this year to a range of \$273.7 to \$278.8 billion. Online shopping has become the preferred destination with 58% of shoppers saying they plan to purchase something online this year.

With inflation impacting most areas of essential and discretionary spending, 62% of shoppers surveyed are looking for sales and promotions to stretch their dollars. This started early with 40% of shoppers surveyed saying they specifically took advantage of sales offered in October to start their holiday shopping. That trend is continuing through the Thanksgiving period with promotions tempting shoppers all weekend. Top selling categories this weekend were smartwatches, televisions, toys, and gaming.

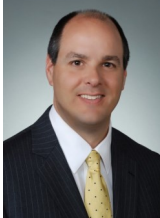
The period between Thanksgiving and Christmas has an extra shopping day in 2023 with 32-days versus 31-days in 2022 and 2021. For the procrastinators, Christmas is on a Monday this year, so a last minute trip to the store is always possible as well.

The NovaPoint Team



Joseph Sroka, CFA, CMT / Chief Investment Officer / jsroka@novapointgroup.com

Joe has over 20 years of experience in the investment management industry. Prior to founding NovaPoint, he was a portfolio manager at Spectrum Advisory Services and GMT Capital in Atlanta, and Epoch Investment Partners in New York. He has also worked as an equity research analyst at Merrill Lynch and ABN Amro. Before beginning his investment career, Joe was an Infantry officer in the U.S. Army. Joe holds a BS from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and an MBA from the University of Chicago. He is both a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and a Chartered Market Technician (CMT).



Alan J. Conner / President and Chief Compliance Officer / aconner@novapointgroup.com

Alan has over 20 years of experience in the investment management industry. Prior to founding NovaPoint, he was a fixed income manager at both Spectrum Advisory Services and a private family office. Alan was also with the Bank Group division of Countrywide Capital Markets where he developed balance sheet strategies for depository institutions. He holds a BS in Banking and an MBA in Finance from Nova Southeastern University. Alan is an endurance athlete and three-time IRONMAN finisher.



Frederick Wright, CFA / Managing Director & Portfolio Manager / fwright@novapointgroup.com

Frederick has over 30 years of experience in the investment management industry. Prior to joining NovaPoint, Frederick was a Partner and Investment Advisor at Brightworth where he advised high net worth investors. Frederick began his investment career in 1991 at Balentine & Co where he rose to Partner. He also co-founded and served as Chief Investment Officer at Wright Investment Management and at Smith & Howard Wealth Management. Prior to beginning his investment career, Frederick served as an Engineer officer in the U.S. Army. He holds a BS from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and an MBA from Emory University. Frederick is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA).



Timothy Benbow, CFP / Managing Director & Portfolio Manager / tbenbow@novapointgroup.com

Tim has over 15 years of experience in the investment management industry. Prior to joining NovaPoint, Tim was the managing partner of Bull's Eye Wealth Management. Tim began his investment career at Raymond James & Associates and was a co-founder of Black Diamond Investment Partners. Following Black Diamond's merger with Waterloo Capital Management, Tim left to found Bull's Eye. He holds a BS from the University of South Carolina and an MBA from the University of Rochester. Tim is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP).



Larry Dixon, EA / Tax Managing Partner / ldixon@novapointgroup.com

Larry leads NovaPoint's accounting, tax and outsourced CFO business. He built his previous company, Atlas Solutions, as a solo entrepreneur before merging into NovaPoint CFO. Larry began his career as a Field Artillery officer in the United States Army. Larry earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he was a four-year letterman on the football team. Larry is a certified Enrolled Agent, recognized by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to represent taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service.

NovaPoint Capital LLC (referred to herein as "NovaPoint" or "the Company") is registered with the SEC as an investment adviser, but registration does not imply any certain level of skill or training. The information contained in this document has not been filed with, reviewed by or approved by any regulatory or self-regulatory authority.

Not an offer of advisory services or securities: This document is limited to the dissemination of general information about the services provided by the Company and is provided for informational purposes only. This document is intended for residents of the United States only and the information contained herein does not constitute and should not be construed as an offering of advisory services or an offer to sell or solicitation to buy any securities or other financial instruments in any jurisdiction in which such offer or solicitation, purchase or sale would be unlawful under the securities, or other applicable laws of such jurisdiction. Nothing contained in this document constitutes tax, legal or investment advice. Responses to any inquiry which may involve the rendering of personalized investment advice for compensation or effecting or attempting to effect transactions in securities will not be made absent compliance with state broker-dealer, investment adviser, broker-dealer agent or investment adviser representative registration requirements, or applicable exemptions or exclusions from such requirements.

Investment risk: The Company makes no representation, and it should not be assumed, that past investment performance is any indication of future results. Moreover, wherever there is the potential for profit there also is the possibility of loss. Certain of the Company's strategies may involve investments that are illiquid, are subject to a substantial risk of loss and are not suitable for certain investors.

Limitation of liability: While the Company uses reasonable efforts to include accurate and up-to-date information in this document, errors or omissions sometimes occur. The Company makes no warranties or representations as to the accuracy of this document. Opinions expressed herein are subject to change without notice. Under no circumstances shall the Company or any party involved in creating, producing, or delivering this document be liable for any direct, incidental, consequential, indirect, or punitive damages that result from the use of the information contained in this document, even if the Company's authorized representative has been advised of the possibility of such damages. Applicable law may not allow the limitation or exclusion of liability or incidental or consequential damages, so the above limitation or exclusion may not apply to you.

Trademarks and copyrights: All trademarks, service marks, trade names, logos, and icons are proprietary to the Company. Nothing contained in this document should be construed as granting, by implication, estoppel, or otherwise, any license or right to use any trademark displayed in this document without the prior written permission of the Company or such third party that may own the trademarks displayed in this document. Your use of the trademarks displayed in this document, or any other content in this document, except as provided herein, is strictly prohibited.