

Covenant  
Asset Management, LLC



# Fourth Quarter 2021 Investment Perspectives



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# Economic and Financial Markets Review & Outlook

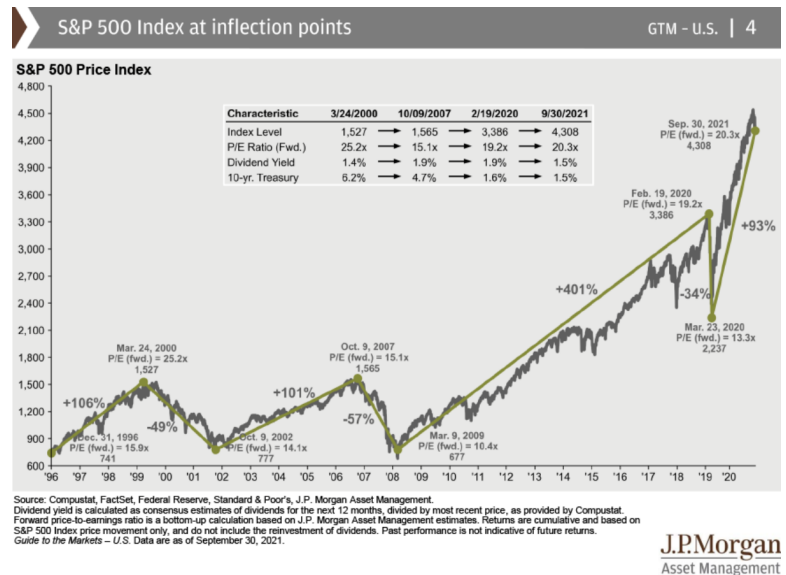


Covenant Asset Management is pleased to offer our latest investment perspectives. In this publication we review third quarter results and highlight key economic, financial and political themes which we expect will drive markets and investment performance in the coming months.

## Key Themes

1. An anticipated shift in Federal Reserve Bank policy and reductions in new Covid-19 cases have triggered a rise in bond yields.
2. A legislative stalemate in Washington and other concerns have weighed on stock prices, causing markets to pull back from their early September all-time highs.
3. Slowing GDP and corporate earnings growth, along with a change in monetary policy and inflation concerns, will drive financial markets performance in the months ahead.
4. Fiscal policy changes, especially as it relates to tax rates, will be closely watched and evaluated for any impact on economic activity.

After an amazing bull run from the March 2020 lows, stock market benchmarks began a long overdue correction in early September. At their September peak, the DJIA was up 16.4%, the S&P 500 rose 21.0% and Nasdaq gained 19.5% for the year. The recent correction has lopped between 5.5% and 8% from those lofty highs, with many high-flying stocks correcting 10-15% in the past month. New Covid-19 cases have been on the decline and the Federal Reserve Bank has signaled the beginning of a tapering program intended to end asset purchases by the end of summer 2022. The combined effects of these factors has translated into expectations for further economic recovery and higher bond yields. U.S. Ten-Year Treasury Note yields have risen from below 1.3% in



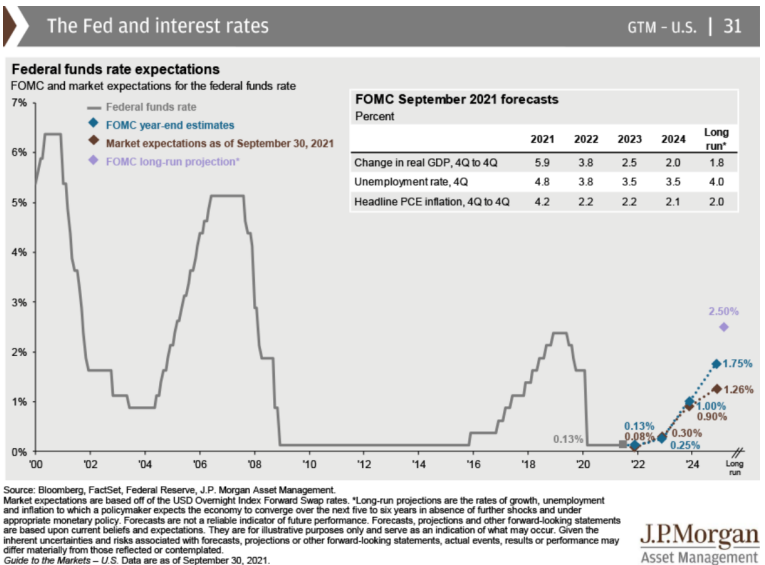
early September to approximately 1.6% at this writing. A rapid rise in bond yields oftentimes puts disproportionate pressure on growth stocks, as valuation levels adjust to the anticipation of higher interest rates. In stock price valuation models, the present value of future earnings are worth less when higher interest rates are applied. For example, when bond yields rose rapidly earlier this year, growth stock indices under-performed value indices by more than 10 percentage points before reversing course as bond yields fell during the summer. A similar experience may occur over the next several quarters, depending on how quickly and how much rates rise.

Until recently, investors have largely ignored potential fiscal policy changes. Democrats currently control all branches of government. Through a congressional rule known as budget reconciliation, only a simple

# Economic and Financial Markets Review

majority is required in both houses of congress and the President can sign the budget legislation into law. The President and Democrat congressional leaders have proposed an aggressive plan to spend an additional \$1.2 trillion on infrastructure and another \$3.5 trillion on additional programs that include hundreds of billions of dollars to transition our economy to renewable energy, add dental and vision care to Medicare, establish free community college, free pre-K childcare and mandatory maternity/paternity leave, amongst other spending. There is bi-partisan support for the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure spending, but no Republicans have signed onto the \$3.5 trillion of additional spending. At least 2 senate Democrats are balking at the price-tag for this additional entitlement spending. Negotiations are ongoing and there remains the possibility that a scaled-back version of the bill might be passed. The big concern is that the advertised cost of the entitlement programs understates their long-term costs. In order to fit within budget reconciliation rules, the new spending must be paid for by cutting other budget items or by increased revenue, AKA increased taxes, or by borrowing. The current language within the legislation calls for increasing taxes for the next ten years, but ending some of the new programs after only five years. Since new entitlement programs are almost never rescinded, the cost of extending the programs could be trillions of dollars more in the future.

The reason this matters to investors is the cost of these new programs will be paid for through higher taxes on corporations, individuals and capital, as well as additional federal borrowing. Higher tax rates have historically resulted in slower economic activity. Additional debt may not seem too



worrisome when the average current interest rate paid on the federal debt is just 1.6%, but as the debt load approaches \$30 trillion, each 1% rise in rates equates to \$300 billion of additional interest. Another concern that appears to have been temporarily resolved is funding the federal government. The debt limit needed to be raised and a budget to fund the government passed to keep the government fully operational. At this writing, congress has agreed to raise the debt limit and continue to fund government operations through December 3 of this year. Hopefully, the stalemate in congress will be resolved before then and investors will settle down.

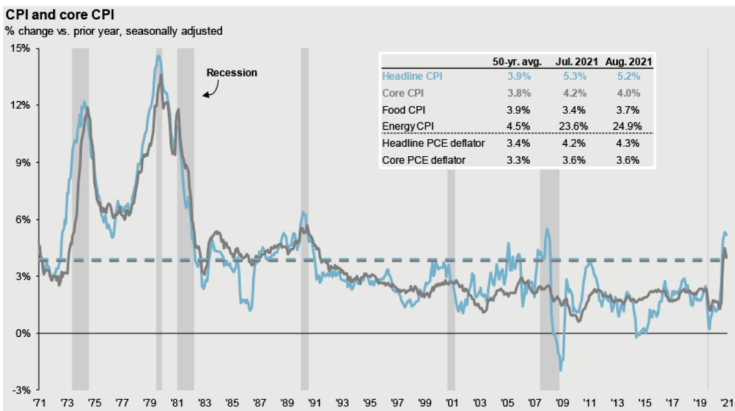
With inflation already running higher than normal, and at the highest level in more than a decade, there are concerns that additional fiscal stimulus at this time may serve to exacerbate and perpetuate inflation. In addition, with monetary policy shifting to one of less accommodation, future increases in the fed funds rate might need to begin sooner



# Economic and Financial Markets Challenges



## Inflation GTM - U.S. | 27



Source: BLS, FactSet, J.P. Morgan Asset Management. CPI used is CPI-U and values shown are % change vs. one year ago. Core CPI is defined as CPI excluding food and energy prices. The Personal Consumption Expenditure (PCE) deflator employs an evolving chain-weighted basket of consumer expenditures instead of the fixed-weight basket used in CPI calculations. Guide to the Markets - U.S. Data are as of September 30, 2021.

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and rise faster to dampen inflation. Rising inflation and interest rates are detrimental to strong economic activity, corporate earnings growth and valuation levels on stocks. GDP and corporate earnings growth are expected to rise at above average rates in 2022 as the economy continues to recover from the effects of the global pandemic. Supply chain disruptions are headwinds to growth and add to inflation. Labor demand continues to be robust and employment appears to be improving modestly, as schools have re-opened and federal supplemental unemployment benefits have ended. However, supply constraints for raw materials and many product components, including semi-conductors, are expected to continue well into next year. Other factors contributing to inflation are energy prices, which have risen sharply this year as supply remains constricted and demand returns to pre-pandemic levels.

Financial markets have come a long way from the pandemic-created lows of March 2020. Driven by massive federal fiscal and monetary aid, stocks and bonds and most other asset classes have risen to

all-time high levels. Although it is still early in the economic recovery, it would not be surprising to see the rise in asset prices pause, as investors ponder the shift in monetary policy and analyze the effects of any future fiscal policy changes. Rising interest rates may tempt some investors to reallocate funds from growth stocks to value stocks. Looking further into the future, as economic and earnings growth slow to normal levels, we should expect growth stocks to attract renewed investor interest. As stocks approach their recent highs, it may be sensible to raise enough cash to fund any portfolio cash distribution needs in the months or quarters ahead. We are cautiously investing new cash, looking opportunistically to invest money when prices correct, rather than chasing prices higher. With respect to investing in fixed-income instruments, we prefer shorter-dated maturities, which may perform relatively better in a period of rising interest rates. For tax-payers in the highest tax brackets and highest taxed states, tax-exempt bonds may be attractive, particularly if individual tax rates rise.

## Returns and valuations by style GTM - U.S. | 13

	10-year annualized			YTD			Current P/E vs. 20-year avg. P/E		
	Value	Blend	Growth	Value	Blend	Growth	Value	Blend	Growth
Large	13.5%	16.6%	19.7%	16.1%	15.9%	14.3%	15.8 / 13.7	20.3 / 15.5	28.6 / 18.5
Mid	13.9%	15.5%	17.5%	18.2%	15.2%	9.6%	16.0 / 14.5	20.0 / 16.4	35.3 / 20.4
Small	13.2%	14.6%	15.7%	22.9%	12.4%	2.8%	16.8 / 17.0	25.4 / 21.4	50.5 / 35.5
	Since market peak (February 2020)			Since market low (March 2020)			Current P/E as % of 20-year avg. P/E		
Large	17.9%	30.6%	44.9%	90.7%	97.3%	111.4%	115.2%	130.0%	154.6%
Mid	22.0%	29.9%	38.9%	115.7%	117.5%	116.1%	110.5%	122.1%	173.0%
Small	31.4%	32.8%	31.7%	131.0%	123.8%	114.0%	99.1%	119.1%	142.4%

Source: FactSet, Russell Investment Group, Standard & Poor's, J.P. Morgan Asset Management. All calculations are cumulative total return, including dividends reinvested for the stated period. Since Market Peak represents period from 2/19/20 to September 30, 2021. Since Market Low represents period from 3/23/20 to September 30, 2021. Returns are cumulative returns, not annualized. For all time periods, total return is based on Russell style indices with the exception of the large blend category, which is based on the S&P 500 index. Past performance is not indicative of future returns. The price-to-earnings is a bottom-up calculation based on the most recent index price, divided by consensus estimates for earnings in the next 12 months (NTM), and is provided by FactSet Market Aggregates and J.P. Morgan Asset Management. Guide to the Markets - U.S. Data are as of September 30, 2021.

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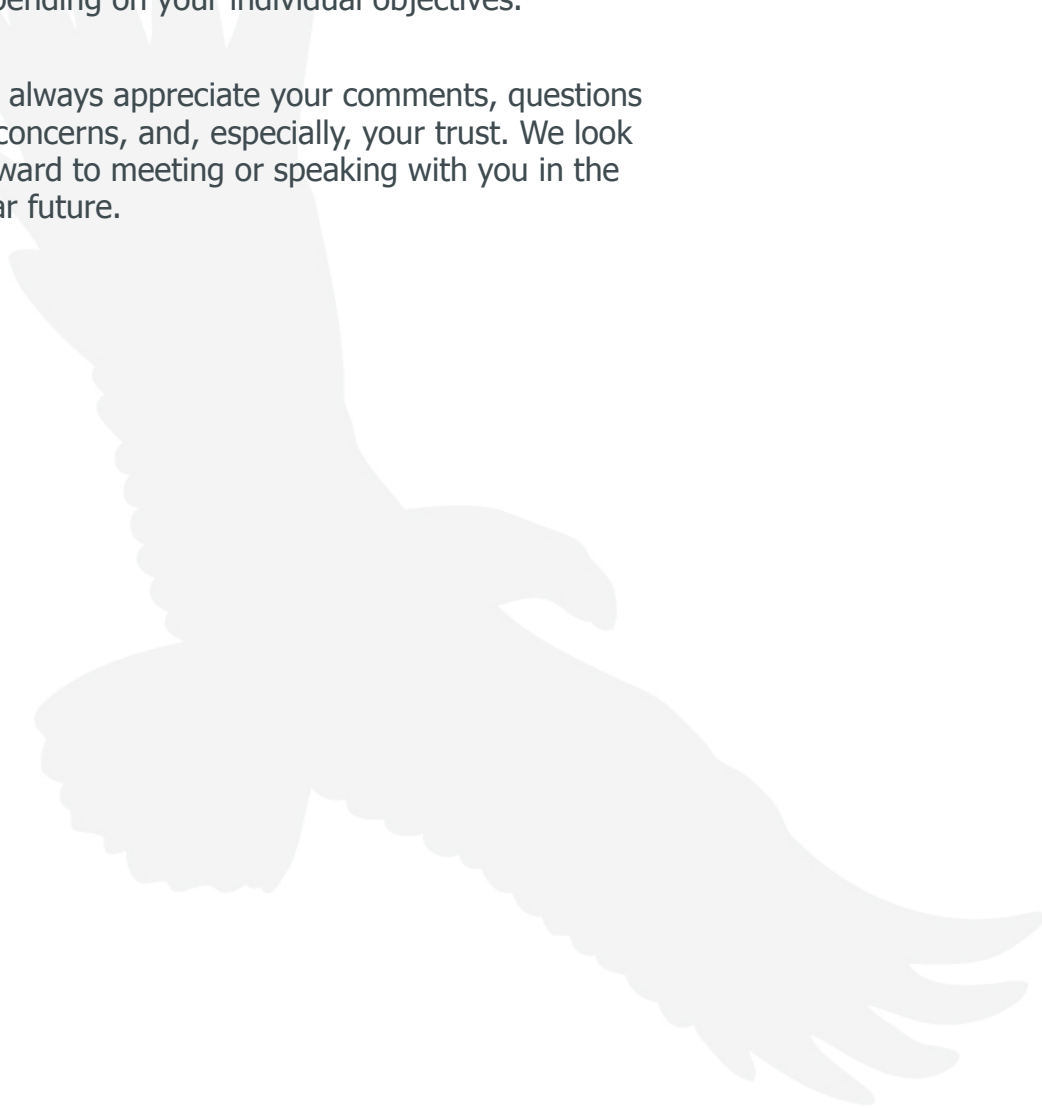


# Economics and Financial Market Challenges



On a longer-term basis, we also prefer high yield bond funds, as they have a track record of performing better than high grade bonds during most market cycles. Some exposure to foreign stocks, real estate and energy pipelines through mutual funds or ETFs may also be warranted, depending on your individual objectives.

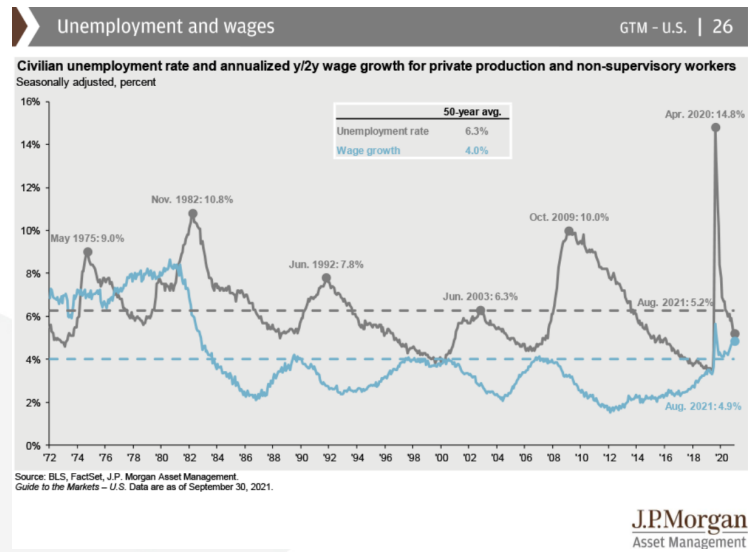
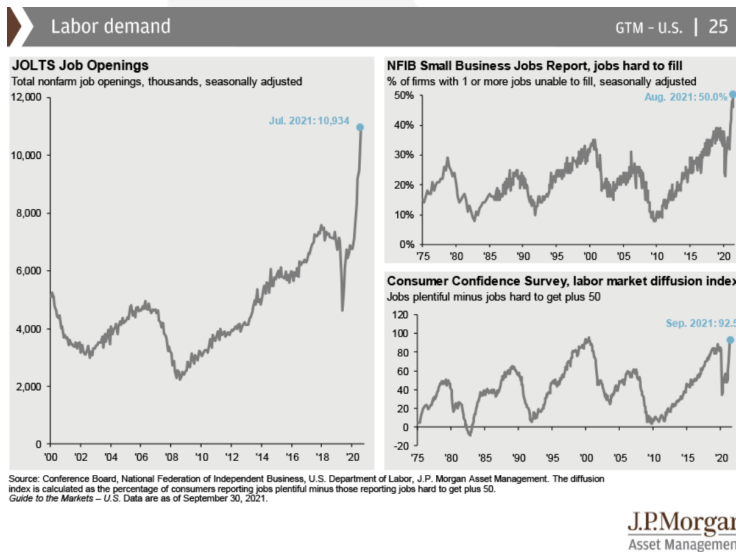
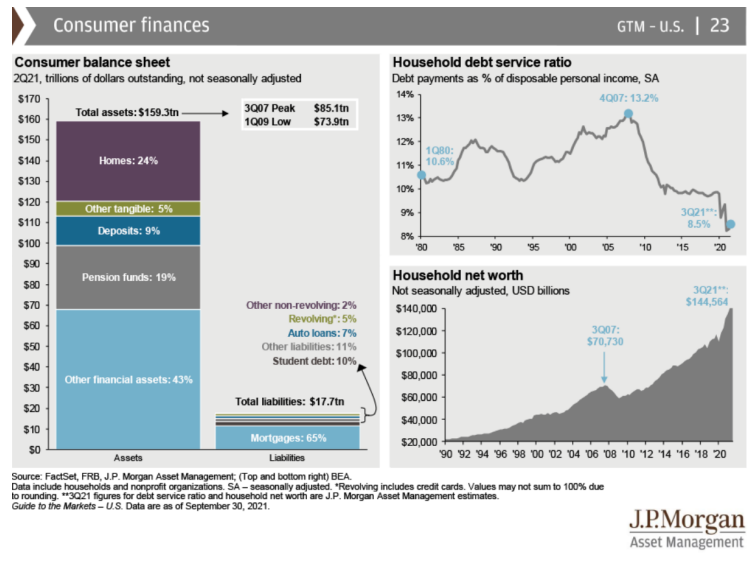
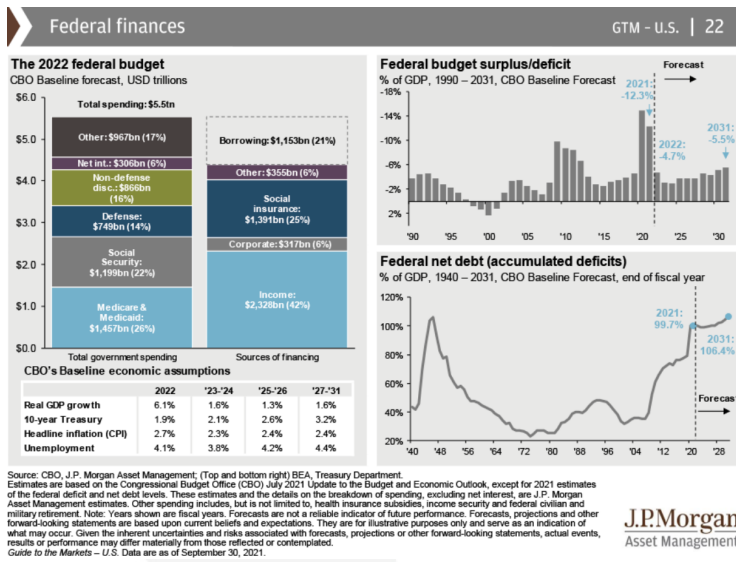
We always appreciate your comments, questions or concerns, and, especially, your trust. We look forward to meeting or speaking with you in the near future.





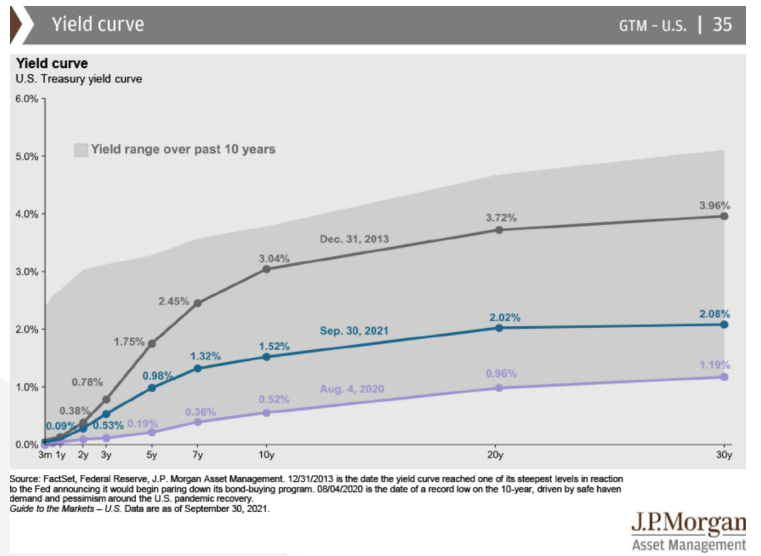
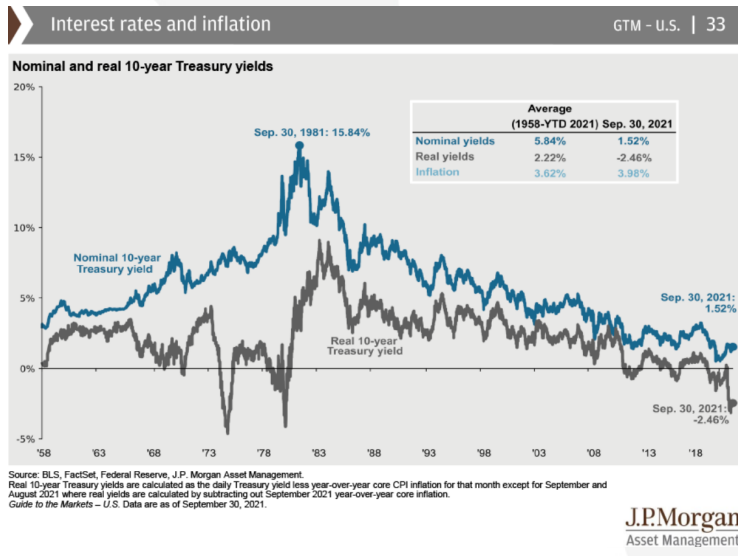
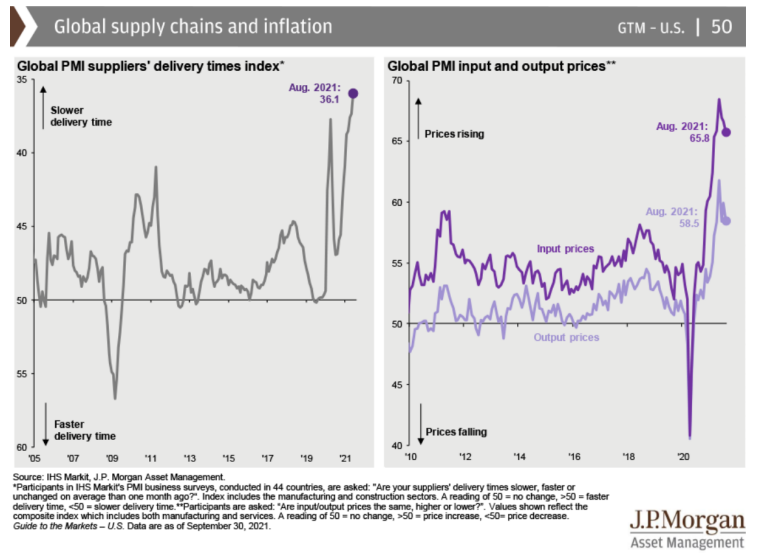
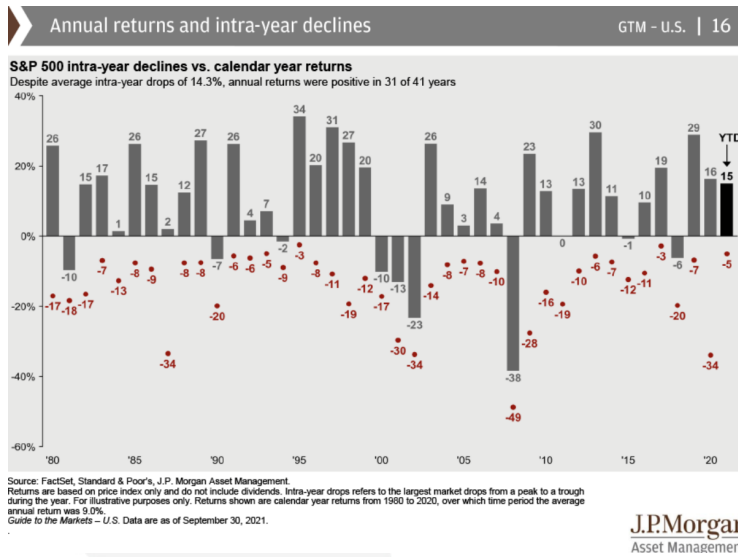
# Economic and Financial Markets Charts

Rather than write extensively about equity valuations, economic statistics and investing principles, we offer the following charts organized by topic and courtesy of J.P. Morgan Asset Management:





# Economic and Financial Markets Charts





# Economic and Financial Markets Charts

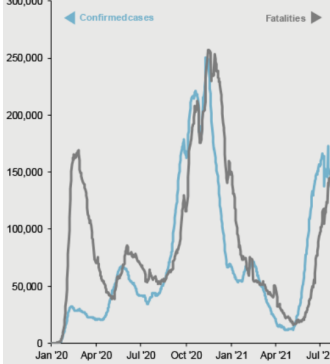


## COVID-19: Cases, fatalities and immunity

GTM - U.S. | 19

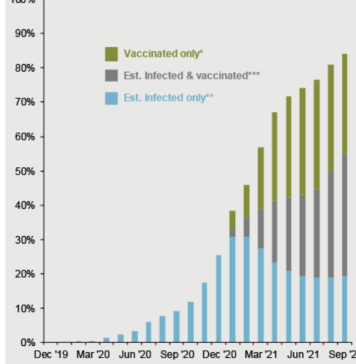
### Change in confirmed cases and fatalities in the U.S.

7-day moving average



### Progress toward immunity

Percentage of population, end of month



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Johns Hopkins CSSE, Our World in Data, J.P. Morgan Asset Management.  
 \*Share of the total population that has received at least one vaccine dose. \*\*Est. Infected represents the number of people who may have been infected by COVID-19 by using the CDC's estimate that 1 in 4.2 COVID-19 infections were reported. \*\*\*Est. Infected & vaccinated assumes those infected equally likely to be vaccinated as those not infected.  
 Guide to the Markets - U.S. Data as of September 30, 2021.

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## Oil markets

GTM - U.S. | 29

### Change in production and consumption of liquid fuels

Production, consumption and inventories, millions of barrels per day

	2018	2019	2020	2021*	2022*	Growth since '18
<b>Production</b>						
U.S.	17.9	19.5	18.6	18.6	20.0	11.9%
OPEC	36.7	34.7	30.7	31.8	33.9	-7.8%
Russia	11.4	11.5	10.5	10.8	11.6	1.6%
<b>Global</b>	<b>100.7</b>	<b>100.7</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>101.5</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>Consumption</b>						
U.S.	20.5	20.5	18.2	19.7	20.6	0.6%
China	13.9	14.8	14.4	15.2	15.9	14.2%
<b>Global</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>101.2</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>101.0</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Inventory Change</b>	0.7	-0.5	1.8	-1.2	0.4	

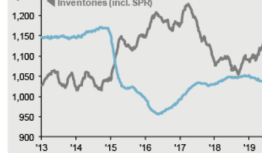
### Price of oil

WTI crude, nominal prices, USD/barrel



### U.S. crude oil inventories and rig count\*\*

Million barrels, number of active rigs



Source: J.P. Morgan Asset Management (Top and bottom left) EIA; (Right) FactSet; (Bottom left) Baker Hughes.  
 \*Forecasts are from the September 2021 EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook and start in 2021. \*\*U.S. crude oil inventories include the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). Active rig count includes both natural gas and oil rigs. WTI crude prices are continuous contract NYM prices in USD.  
 Guide to the Markets - U.S. Data as of September 30, 2021.

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## Asset class returns

GTM - U.S. | 61

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	YTD	Ann.	Vol.
REITs	15.1%	39.8%	5.2%	79.0%	27.5%	8.3%	19.7%	38.8%	28.6%	2.8%	21.3%	17.8%	1.8%	31.5%	29.9%	25%	9.3%	23.3%
EM Equity	32.6%	16.2%	1.6%	39.4%	26.9%	7.8%	19.6%	32.4%	13.7%	1.4%	14.3%	23.6%	0.0%	28.7%	21.6%	18.7%	8.3%	23.1%
DM Equity	26.3%	11.6%	25.4%	32.5%	19.2%	3.1%	18.6%	23.3%	6.0%	0.5%	12.0%	21.8%	-4.0%	25.3%	18.4%	15.3%	7.5%	22.6%
Small Cap	16.4%	7.1%	28.3%	28.0%	16.8%	2.7%	17.3%	19.5%	5.2%	0.9%	11.6%	19.5%	-4.4%	19.5%	8.3%	8.8%	6.3%	18.8%
Large Cap	10.8%	7.0%	-33.8%	27.2%	15.1%	8.1%	16.3%	7.3%	4.9%	0.4%	11.6%	14.8%	-4.4%	19.5%	8.3%	8.8%	6.3%	18.8%
Asset Alloc.	15.3%	3.5%	-35.6%	21.5%	14.8%	-6.7%	16.0%	2.9%	0.0%	-2.0%	8.6%	10.4%	-5.8%	18.3%	7.5%	8.7%	6.7%	16.7%
High Yield	10.7%	4.8%	-27.0%	23.9%	13.3%	-4.2%	12.2%	0.9%	0.9%	-2.7%	8.2%	8.7%	-11.9%	12.6%	7.0%	6.7%	5.9%	12.2%
Cash	4.8%	3.2%	-37.7%	18.9%	8.2%	-11.7%	4.2%	-2.0%	-1.8%	-4.4%	2.6%	3.5%	-11.2%	11.2%	0.5%	0.0%	4.5%	11.8%
Fixed Income	4.3%	-1.6%	-43.3%	16.5%	3.9%	-0.3%	0.9%	-2.3%	-4.5%	-14.6%	1.5%	1.7%	-13.4%	7.7%	-3.1%	-1.0%	1.2%	3.2%
Comdty	2.1%	15.2%	15.2%	8.5%	0.9%	-1.1%	3.5%	-17.0%	24.2%	0.3%	8.8%	14.2%	2.2%	-5.1%	-1.6%	4.9%	0.8%	0.8%

Source: Barclays, Bloomberg, FactSet, MSCI, NAREIT, Russell, Standard & Poor's, J.P. Morgan Asset Management.  
 Large cap: S&P 500, Small cap: Russell 2000, EM Equity: MSCI EAFE, DM Equity: MSCI EAFE, Comdty: Bloomberg Commodity Index, High Yield: Bloomberg Barclays Global HY Index, Fixed Income: Bloomberg Barclays US Aggregate, REITs: NAREIT Equity REIT Index, Cash: Bloomberg Barclays 1-3m Treasury, The "Asset Allocation" portfolio assumes the following weights: 25% in the S&P 500, 10% in the Russell 2000, 15% in the MSCI EAFE, 5% in the MSCI EME, 25% in the Bloomberg Barclays US Aggregate, 5% in the Bloomberg Barclays 1-3m Treasury, 5% in the Bloomberg Barclays Global High Yield Index, 0% in the Bloomberg Commodity Index and 5% in the NAREIT Equity REIT Index. Balanced portfolio assumes annual rebalancing. Annualized (Ar.) return and volatility (Vol.) represents period from 1/2010/2005 to 1/2021/2020. Please see disclosure page at end for index definitions. All data represents total return for stated period. The "Asset Allocation" portfolio is for illustrative purposes only. Past performance is not indicative of future returns.  
 Guide to the Markets - U.S. Data as of September 30, 2021

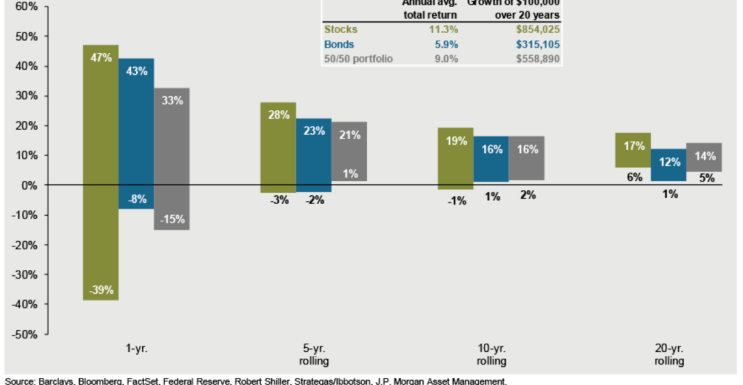
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## Time, diversification and the volatility of returns

GTM - U.S. | 63

### Range of stock, bond and blended total returns

Annual total returns, 1950-2020



Source: Barclays, Bloomberg, FactSet, Federal Reserve, Robert Shiller, Strategas/Ibbotson, J.P. Morgan Asset Management.  
 Returns shown are based on calendar year returns from 1950 to 2020. Stocks represent the S&P 500 Shiller Composite and Bonds represent Strategas/Ibbotson for periods from 1950 to 2010 and Bloomberg Barclays Aggregate thereafter. Growth of \$100,000 is based on annual average total returns from 1950 to 2020.  
 Guide to the Markets - U.S. Data as of September 30, 2021.

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\*Any performance-related data listed in this report may represent un-audited results compiled by Covenant Asset Management or others. It could be intended to reflect results that are indicative of Covenant's individual client's equity performance who religiously invest according to our model portfolios. This performance data represents past performance and individual client results may vary materially. Past performance does not guarantee future results and current performance may be higher or lower than the performance data quoted.

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