

### **DEAR CLIENTS & FRIENDS;**

The Wisco-managed ETF portfolios performed well in the fourth quarter. Our lower risk portfolios (Conservative & Balanced) were up in the 2-3% range while our higher risk portfolios (Growth & Aggressive) were up 3-5%. Performance was driven by gains in global equities and commodities.

The U.S. and Overseas stock markets were strong in the fourth quarter, rising 9% and 3%, respectively. We believe the gains were largely driven by stimulative fiscal policies this year, including the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 Stimulus Package in March (with monthly Child Tax Credit payments that extended through December 2021) as well as a \$1 trillion Infrastructure bill which passed in November. In addition, the Build Back Better bill is on the table for 2022 which proposes another \$1.7 trillion in various spending initiatives. On the monetary side, policy rates in the largest global economies (U.S., Canada, Europe, and Japan) all remain in the 0%-0.25% range which is stimulative to global growth as well. As a result of accommodative fiscal and monetary policy around the world, six of the seven G7 countries are expected to grow their economies at a 4%-plus rate in 2022.

**Fixed Income performance was flat in the quarter and for the year.** Rising inflation expectations remain a concern for bond investors as high inflation could eventually push up treasury rates (generally treasury rates and bond returns move in opposite directions). CPI inflation rose 6.2% and 6.8% in October and November and economists are expecting a 3.9% increase for 2022. For perspective, it's been forty years since the U.S. has experienced inflation at levels similar to the last few months. Given the inflationary environment and strengthening economy, the Fed recently accelerated the timeline for raising the policy rate and now expects three rate hikes in 2022. We continue to use fixed income allocations in our ETF portfolios but are positioned with shorter duration to protect against rising future rates.

Commodity markets were mixed in the quarter. Crude oil and natural gas cooled off in the fourth quarter after rallying in the first three quarters of the year. We added an allocation to a broad-based commodity ETN in July which gave us exposure to energy this period which was a small drag on performance. However, we also held a gold and a silver ETF which were up in the mid-single digits. Wisco uses alternative exposures (like metals, agricultural products, and energy) in our ETF portfolios as they tend to be less correlated to stocks and bonds and improve portfolio diversification.

As a reminder, our policy is to rebalance client portfolios on at least a semi-annual basis. To that end, we plan to complete our January rebalancing over the next few weeks. Feel free to contact us to discuss the rebalancing of your portfolio, your targeted risk level, or any other life changes that may be relevant to how your portfolio is invested. Also, the 2021 IRA contribution deadline is fast approaching so let us know if we can help.

At Wisco, we believe our approach of designing well-diversified, low-cost investment portfolios is the best way to produce favorable results over time. We would like to thank you for providing us with the opportunity to work with you as your investment advisor. We appreciate your business!

Sincerely,

The Wisco Team

## **Wisco Investment Management**

Wisco-managed portfolios are constructed using five asset classes; Domestic Equity, International Equity, Domestic Fixed Income, Alternative Investments and Money Market. Our current managed portfolio asset class allocations are as follows:

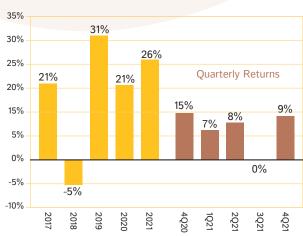
#### WISCO MANAGED PORTFOLIOS

	Conservative	Balanced	<b>Balanced Growth</b>	Growth	Aggressive
Domestic Equity	24%	33%	41%	50%	60%
International Equity	9%	13%	16%	21%	26%
Domestic Fixed Incom	e 56%	43%	32%	18%	3%
Alternative Investment	s 10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Money Market	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target Volatility*	6%	8%	10%	12%	15%

<sup>\*</sup>Target Volatility is our estimate for the annual standard deviation of portfolio returns. Source: Wisco Investment Management LLC

# Fourth Quarter 2021 Market Review

## **DOMESTIC EQUITY**



Source: Dow Jones U.S. Broad Stock Market Index and Wisco.

The stock market finished a strong year with an impressive 4th quarter. The S&P 500 closed the year at 4766 near an all-time, and up 113% from the March 2020 bottom. Large-cap stocks increased 10% and once again outperformed small-cap stocks (up 3%) this quarter. The United States economic recovery continued with 3Q21 GDP up 2.3%. S&P 500's earnings increased 21% in 3Q21, with all sectors posting positive earnings growth except Financials (-1%) and Utilities (-3%).

The strongest earnings growth came from Industrials (+108%) and Materials (+62%). While it is unlikely that corporate earnings will be able to achieve 2021's 46% growth rate in 2022, we do think high single digit earnings growth is possible in 2022 for three reasons. First, supply chain inefficiencies should improve next year as manufacturing normalizes. Second, we feel there is still pent-up demand from covid shutdowns. Finally, more infrastructure spending by the government should add to growth. The Federal Reserve is likely to be more hawkish in 2022 than 2021, however, its gradual approach to tightening monetary policy shouldn't be too onerous for business.

Easy monetary policy and strong earnings growth resulted in above normal equity returns for 2021. Valuation is on the high side with the S&P 500 trading at 21x 2022's earnings estimate. However, this higher PE may be justified by low interest rates and a solid growth outlook for corporate earnings. We are maintaining our domestic equity weighting across all client portfolios. We plan on increasing our large cap high dividend holdings, as we feel dividend payers may perform better in a rising rate environment. This trade will be funded be selling some mid and small cap positions.

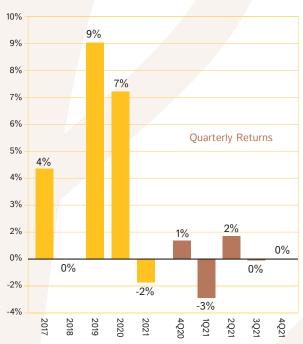
## INTERNATIONAL EQUITY

## 30% 27% 25% 22% **Quarterly Returns** 20% 16% 15% 10% 9% 10% 6% 5% 3% 5% 0% -4% -10% -15% -14% -20% 2017 2020 Source: MSCI ACWI ex USA and Wisco

The MSCI All World Index increased 3% in 4Q21, with FTSE Developed Large Cap Index up 3%, FTSE Small Cap Index up 1% and FTSE Emerging Market Index down 1%. For the year, developed large cap increased 11%, while emerging markets were down 1%. In Europe, markets were mixed with gains in Switzerland (+12%) and France (+8%) offset by a decline in Hungary (-8%). For the year, Austria increased 33%. In Asia, Hong Kong was down 5%, South Korea declined 3% and Japan declined 5%. In emerging markets, Brazil (-8%) and Russia (-10%) were among the weakest performers, however, Shanghai and South Africa both increased 3% and 8%, respectively. For the year, Brazil was one of the weakest performers down 18%.

The Eurozone and British economies continue to post strong GDP numbers up 9.1% and 5.1%, respectively. However, Asian economies continue to lag the rest of the world with GDP declines in Japan (-3.6%) and Thailand (-4.2%), meanwhile China was up just 0.8%. International stocks currently trade at a 39% PE discount to United States' stocks. Given this attractive valuation and the potential for significant vaccination rate improvements in 2022, we are increasing our international stock exposure in all client portfolios.

#### DOMESTIC FIXED INCOME



Source: Barclays Capital U.S. Aggregate Bond Index and Wisco.

The Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index was flat in 4Q21 with Intermediate Treasuries down 1%, Short-term Investment Grade Bonds down 1%. Long-term Investment Grade Bonds up 1% and High Yield Bonds up 1%. The 10-year treasury yield traded in a tight range this quarter, starting at 1.53%, trading as high as 1.69% and as low as 1.34% before finishing at the year at 1.51%. Annual inflation (CPI) in November came in at an alarming 6.8%, which could force the Federal Reserve to become more hawkish. The Fed is reducing its bond purchases and expects to end this program in March. It is likely that the Fed will also start raising the Fed Funds rate in 2022. The Fed now holds \$8.8T in fixed income securities up \$1.4T in the last year. The money supply (M2) now stands at \$21.4T up 13% in the last twelve months.

Fixed Income posted a negative return for the year, its worst performance since 2013. Going forward, the Fed may have to become more aggressive fighting inflation, and in this scenario, it seems unlikely Fixed Income will produce strong returns. For this reason, we are going to reduce our Fixed Income exposure in all client accounts and plan to increase our credit exposure while reducing our interest rate exposure.

#### **ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS**

The Dow Jones-UBS Commodity Index decreased 2% in 4Q21 and for the year the index increased 31%. In agriculture, grain prices were strong. Corn prices were up 11%¹ in 4Q21 and 23%¹ for the year, soybean prices increased 6%¹ in 4Q21 and 1%¹ for the year, and wheat prices increased 6%¹ in 4Q21 and 20%¹ for the year. Strong demand and lower supply supported grain prices in 2021.

Precious metal prices were up in the quarter, but down for the year. Silver increased 5%³ in 4Q21 but declined 12%³ for the year and gold prices increased 4%² in 4Q21 but declined 5%² for the year.

The Cushing, Oklahoma spot price for WTI crude oil was flat in 4Q21 but increased 56% in 2021. Natural gas prices were very volatile in 2021. The January 2022 contract decreased 37% in the quarter but was still up 47% in 2021. Shortages of natural gas in Europe drove much of this volatility.

Wisco is going to increase exposure to a broadbased commodity ETN in all client portfolios, as we feel commodities offer potential upside and are less correlated with stocks and bonds. We are also maintaining a position in a gold ETF and moderately reducing our position in a silver ETF. We feel gold and silver may hedge investors against geopolitical uncertainty as well as protect against higher inflation and perform well with accelerating GDP growth around the world.

#### MONEY MARKET

The current money market yield is 0.03%. Given this low yield, Wisco is going to hold a minimal amount of Cash/Money Market assets in our client portfolios. We do feel this yield could increase in 2022.

- 1. Return calculation based on the near future contract as quoted in the Wall Street Journal.
- 2. Return calculation uses Aberdeen Physical Gold Shares (SGOL) as a proxy for gold.
- 3. Return calculation uses Aberdeen Physical Silver Trust ETF (SIVR) as a proxy for silver.
- 4. Return calculation uses Cushing, OK WTI spot price FOB as a proxy for oil.

**Disclaimer:** Wisco Investment Management LLC is a registered investment advisor. Information presented is for educational purposes only and does not intend to make an offer or solicitation for the sale or purchase of any specific securities product, service, or investment strategy. Investments involve risk and unless otherwise stated, are not guaranteed. Be sure to first consult with a qualified financial adviser, tax professional, or attorney before implementing any strategy or recommendation discussed herein.

