



Happy Friday and almost Easter,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family doing well, even though we are receiving a small reminder today that we are not yet done with winter. Springtime in IL is always interesting and completely unpredictable.

I am sure that I am not the only person who is looking at the calendar in amazement that next week is the last week of March. Wow, this year is going by so quickly. But the end of March always means that I get to celebrate a very special day; our wedding anniversary on March 29th. This year marks 38 years that Julie has graciously and mercifully stayed married to me. I am a very blessed man! This year, the end of March also brings us Easter weekend. Another very special day for me as I am reminded of how much I have been forgiven because of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. May you and your family have a wonderful Easter!

There has not been a lot of unexpected headlines or surprises the past two weeks. The Dow & S&P are up about 2% even though as I type, both indexes are down today. This could be due to some profit taking after a solid two-week performance. Powell did make a statement that he is projecting to decrease rates 3 times yet in 2024. The markets liked this news, but I just don't see how he is going to justify these rate decreases for one and second, have the time to do it without causing everything that the Fed has been working to accomplish the past 2 ½ years to unravel. While the economy still seems to be very strong as well as the job market, I am concerned that there could be some volatility when Powell announces an "amendment" to his 3 rates decrease comment with something like; we hope to cut rates two times in 2024. A statement like this could cause a sell-off in the markets, but I believe it will be short-lived and the markets should moderate quickly.

I am still of the belief that the economy will begin to slow down as the high credit card interest rates and higher summer gas prices begin to impact the average consumer's budget. If this does happen then I believe a rate decrease will be delayed until late 3rd quarter.

As of now we are continuing with our normal review schedules, but if you would like to discuss your portfolio, please call me anytime, even if over the weekend at 815-973-3636 or send me an email and I will reply or call you.

Again, I hope that you and your family have a Blessed Easter.

Take care,

Brett