



Encouraging Lifelong Generosity with God's Abundance

> ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2023

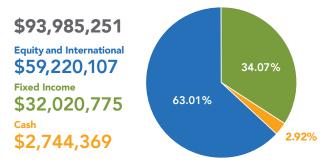


## **OUR MISSION**

At Midwest Methodist Foundation, we collaborate with donors and inspire individual plans for lifelong generosity. As entrusted stewards, we have decades of experience working with individuals, churches, endowments, and investment partners. Our work is grounded in our faith that we can – and must – envision a better world.

# INVESTED ASSETS UNDER STEWARDSHIP

(as of 12/31/2023)



Dear Friends,

You may notice this year's Stewardship Report looks different. Earlier this year, we announced our new name – Midwest Methodist Foundation – and a new logo. We hope you agree that our new brand better represents the organization we are today.

Midwest Methodist Foundation is still the same independent 501(c)(3) public charity that was founded in 1949-75 years ago! Our core mission remains; we are committed to partnering with donors and churches on a strategy that reflects their philanthropic wishes.

In 2023, we continued to do meaningful work on behalf of our many member churches and individual donors. I am particularly proud of our annual Uplifting Young Methodist Scholarship recipients. I am inspired by this next generation of leaders!

Our work as stewards – outlined on the following pages – is focused around three pillars:

### FIDUCIARY GOVERNANCE

As fiduciaries, the Board has a stated legal duty to act in the best interests of you, our constituents.

#### **MISSION-ALIGNED PORTFOLIOS**

We invest in broadly diversified portfolios that seek competitive returns and align with the ideals of the *Social Principles* and ¶ 717 *Sustainable and Socially Responsible Investments.* 

### PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT ACCOUNTABILITY

We hold ourselves accountable to you through regular, easy-to-understand performance and impact reporting (including this report).

On behalf of our Board, I am pleased to present you with this year's Annual Stewardship Report, which includes financial performance and the impact of our work together.

In closing, I would like to thank our Board for their insights, hard work, and service. Just a few days before Christmas, board member Debbie Gruetzmacher passed away after complications from COVID. She was a friend and colleague, and she will be missed.

Thank you for your generosity and I hope we have a chance to meet soon.

Sincerely yours,

his Walter

Chris Walters President & CEO

#### Board of Directors

Mr. George Gill Board Chair

Ms. Marta Rodriguez, CFA Vice Chair

> Mr. Sach Diwan Treasurer

Ms. Lisa Butler Secretary

Ms. Ergeline Calimlim Rev. Avani Christian

Vev. Avani Christia

Mr. Brad Colby

Mr. George Groves

Ms. Debbie Gruetzmacher Mr. Denny Hackett Rev. Violet Johnicker

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Rev. Dr. Kimberly Lewis-Davis

Rev. Dr. Grace Oh

Mr. James Stoddard

Mr. Thomas Sumner

Mr. Eugene Williams

#### Ex-Officio

Rev. Chris Walters President & CEO, Midwest Methodist Foundation

Rev. Dan Schwerin Bishop, Northern Illinois Conference

#### 2023 Market Overview

As 2023 welcomed the post-pandemic era, the global economy exhibited strong growth while continuing to face challenges related to inflation, economic uncertainty, and growing geopolitical stress.

In 2023, real GDP grew by 3.1% in the U.S., surpassing the consensus expectations for the year and more than tripling the 0.9% growth in 2022.\* The increase was largely driven by robust consumer spending, private investment, government expenditure, and continued strength in the labor market. Though lower economic gains in the first half of the year sustained concerns of a potential recession, an upturn marked by substantial growth in the third and fourth quarters allayed concerns and supported the view of a 'soft landing' for the economy.

Inflation in the U.S. continued to moderate to end the year at 3.4% – a 0.3% uptick from its lowest point of the year. This marked a sizable decrease from its peak of 9.1% in 2022. The decline followed only four mild rate hikes by the Federal Reserve throughout the year compared to an aggressive seven hikes in 2022.

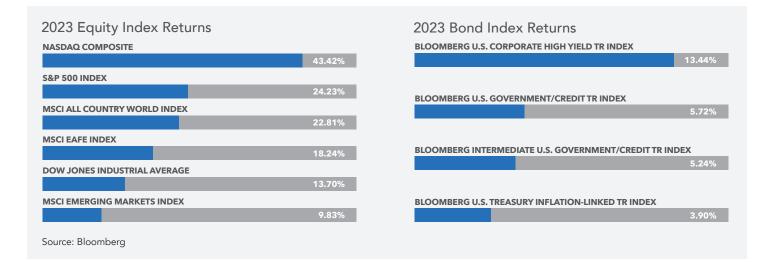
In a dramatic departure from the previous year, U.S. markets experienced notable rallies in both bonds and equities in 2023. Information Technology and Communication Services were the top performing sectors for the year. Their success was bolstered by the recovery of supply chains, advances in artificial intelligence (AI), and shifts in investor preferences, while other sectors lagged. The S&P 500 returned 24.23% for the year, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 13.70%, and the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite had the best return of the major indexes, gaining 43.4%. Importantly, it should be noted that a substantial portion of the S&P 500's returns in 2023 were attributed to the performance of seven specific stocks, commonly referred to as the 'Magnificent Seven.' Foreign stocks also corrected losses from the previous year, returning 18.24%, as measured by the MSCI EAFE index.

Bond markets experienced higher-than-normal volatility throughout the year, with domestic interest rates increasing due to stronger than expected economic growth, instability in the banking sector, and a restrained monetary policy. The yield on the 10-year treasury bond increased a modest 0.03% from January to end the year at 3.86%, but not before reaching a high of 5% in October.

#### 2023 Portfolio Strategies

The Investment Committee of Midwest Methodist Foundation maintained a consistent approach to managing assets in 2023. The Foundation managed multiple portfolios in accordance with the Investment Policy Statement and based on our understanding that asset allocation is the primary determinant of risk and return. Each of the portfolios was managed for diversification, low fees, and in alignment with the principles set forth in *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. The Foundation added a new fixed income manager with the goal to broaden exposure and have greater impact transparency.

The Foundation's 2023 performance – both financial and impact – are highlighted on the following pages.



\* Real GDP measured from Q4 2022 to Q4 2023 and Q4 2021 to Q4 2022, respectively. Sources: Bloomberg, New York Times

# 2023 Model Portfolios and Performance

### Model Portfolios



Note: Models are constructed and periodically rebalanced to target allocations that will vary based on market fluctuations. Accounts hold various equity and fixed income instruments and may include cash and cash equivalents.

### Annualized Performance as of December 31, 2023<sup>1</sup>

	TRAILING 1 YR	TRAILING 3 YRS	TRAILING 5 YRS
Aggressive Model			
MMF — Aggressive Model	20.13 %	5.87 %	11.79 %
Benchmark: MMF Aggressive Blended Benchmark <sup>2</sup>	20.19	5.72	11.35
Moderate Model			
MMF — Moderate Model	15.47	3.67	8.69
Benchmark: MMF Moderate Blended Benchmark <sup>3</sup>	15.82	3.78	8.60
Conservative Model			
MMF — Conservative Model	11.09	1.48	5.31
Benchmark: MMF Conservative Blended Benchmark <sup>4</sup>	11.24	1.55	5.46

<sup>1</sup> Time Weighted Rates of Return are calculated net of all fees.

<sup>2</sup> MMF Aggressive Blended Benchmark: The Benchmark is composed of 85% MSCI All Country World Index World(USD)(TRN), 15% Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond TR (1/1/2016–1/1/2018), 54% Russell 1000 TR, 21% BNYM Dev Mkt Classic ADR Ind, 9% Bloomberg Intermediate U.S. Government/ Credit TR, 6% BNYM Emg Mkt Classic ADR Ind, 5% S&P Small Cap 600 TR, 3% Bloomberg Gbl Agg Ex USD TR Hdg USD, 2% BOFAML 3-Month U.S. TBill TR (1/2/2018 to date).

<sup>3</sup> MMF Moderate Blended Benchmark: The Benchmark is composed of 60% MSCI All Country World Index World(USD)(TRN), 40% Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond TR (1/1/2016–1/1/2018), 38% Russell 1000 TR, 26% Bloomberg Intermediate U.S. Government/Credit TR, 14% BNYM Dev Mkt Classic ADR Ind, 8% Bloomberg Gbl Agg Ex USD TR Hdg USD, 4% BNYM Emg Mkt Classic ADR Ind, 4% S&P Small Cap 600 TR, 4% Bloomberg 1-3 Govt/Credit Bond TR, 2% BOFAML 3-Month U.S. T-Bill TR (1/2/2018 to date).

<sup>4</sup> MMF Conservative Blended Benchmark: The Benchmark is composed of 65% Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond TR, 35% MSCI All Country World Index World(USD)(TRN) (1/1/2016–1/1/2018), 44% Bloomberg Intermediate U.S. Government/Credit TR, 20% Russell 1000 TR, 14% Bloomberg Gbl Agg Ex USD TR Hdg USD, 9% BNYM Dev Mkt Classic ADR Ind, 7% Bloomberg 1-3 Govt/Credit Bond TR, 2% BOFAML 3-Month U.S. T-Bill TR, 2% BNYM Emg Mkt Classic ADR Ind, 2% S&P Small Cap 600 TR (1/2/2018 to date).

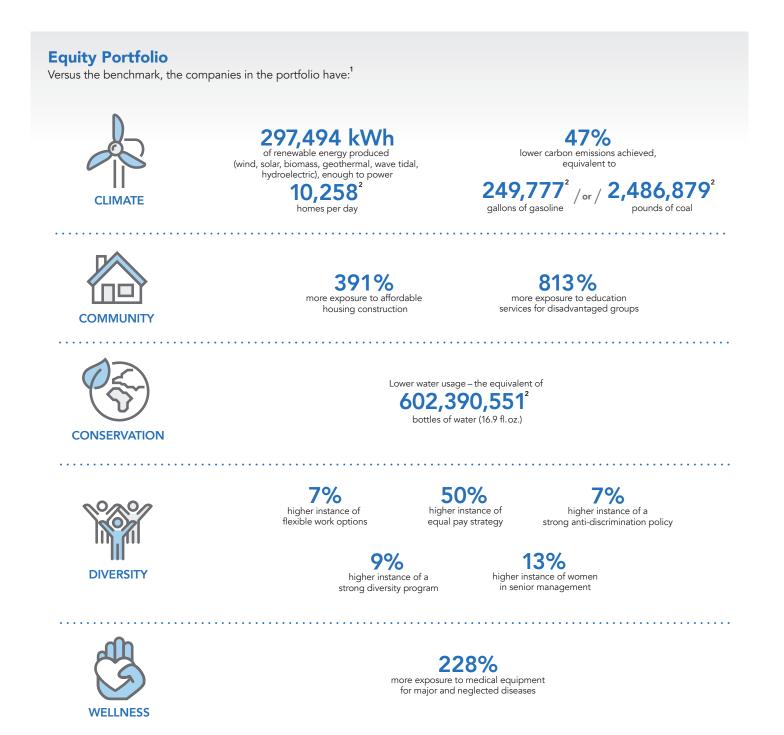
Effective June 12, 2020, Midwest Methodist Foundation accounts are managed by SouthCol Advisors, LLC. subject to a discretionary investment advisory agreement. Previously, accounts were managed by Envestnet Asset Management, Inc. James Lumberg served as the investment advisory representative to Midwest Methodist Foundation at Envestnet and continues at SouthCol Advisors, LLC.

Source: Envestnet, Inc.

# 2023 Impact Performance

## **OUR INVESTMENTS HELP AMPLIFY OUR WORK AND MISSION**

In addition to financial performance, our portfolios have had a measurable impact in the world. Our equity and fixed-income portfolios are invested in alignment with our mission and values. We measure the impact in five categories: Climate, Community, Conservation, Diversity, and Wellness.



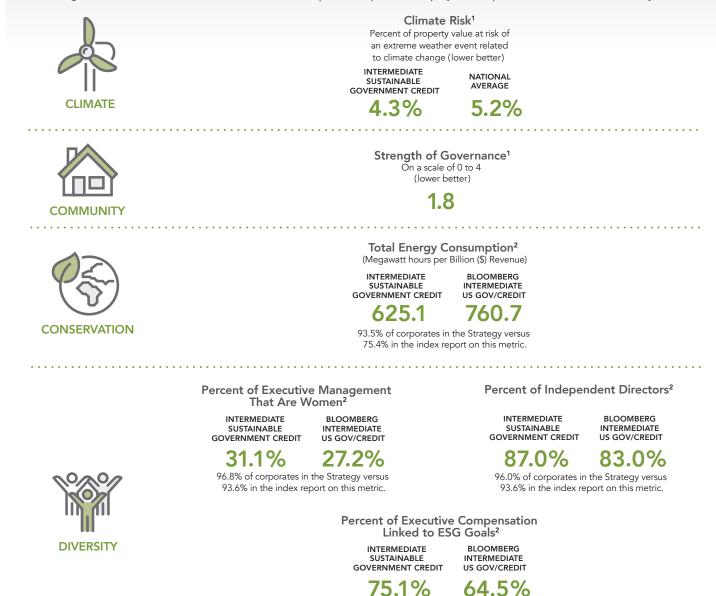
<sup>1</sup> Impact exposure percentages are based on the assets in the equity portion of Midwest Methodist Foundation portfolios as of 12/31/2023. The benchmark referenced here for comparison with the equity portion of the portfolios is a blended equity benchmark composed of 64% CRSP U.S. Large Cap Index, 6% CRSP U.S. Small Cap Index, 25% S&P/BNY Mellon ADR Index, and 5% S&P/BNY Mellon Emerging ADR Index. Impact data provided by Envestnet and Sustainalytics, a third-party firm that provides research, ratings, and analytics. **All data as of 12/31/2023.** 

<sup>2</sup> Companies in the portfolio would contribute to approximately these impacts, based on a \$58 million initial investment in the Midwest Methodist Foundation equity portfolio.

At the end of 2023, the Foundation added a new fixed income manager – Breckinridge Capital Advisors – with the goal to broaden exposure and provide greater impact transparency. Since Breckinridge was not added until the end of the fourth quarter, the metrics below do not represent Midwest Methodist Foundation's actual fixed-income assets in the Breckinridge Intermediate Sustainable Government Credit Strategy.

### **Fixed Income Portfolio**

The following metrics are from a sample portfolio of the Breckinridge Intermediate Sustainable Government Strategy. The strategy invests in government-related securities that finance municipal and supranational projects, corporate bonds, and U.S. Treasury securities.



96.8% of corporates in the Strategy versus 94.0% in the index report on this metric.

<sup>1</sup> Government-Related ESG Highlights – the National Average for Climate Risk was calculated by Breckinridge from data provided by RisQ and available data from Merritt Research Services, respectively. The Strength of Governance rating is an average of Breckinridge's internal governance scores that are assigned to each municipal issuer that it covers. **All data as of 12/31/2023.** 

<sup>2</sup> Corporate ESG metric figures are Bloomberg data based on a weighted average of the reported values by the corporate holding in the Strategy compared to a weighted average of the reported values of the corporate holdings in the index. **All data as of 12/31/2023.** Due to differences in the percentages of companies reporting metrics for the strategy vs. the benchmark and the unavailability of such data, the impact statistics are not complete comparisons.

## STEP ONE | GUIDING TENETS

Our goal is to build customized portfolios that reflect our mission, vision, and values. Portfolios are constructed based on three tenets:

#### ASSET ALLOCATION

We focus on asset allocation as the primary determinant for overall investment performance.

#### **DIVERSIFIED MARKET-BASED RETURNS**

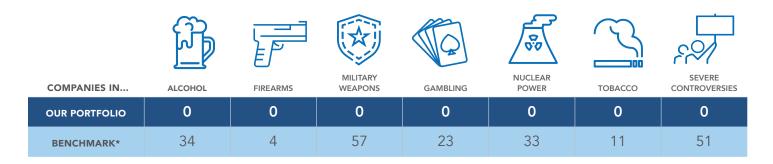
We seek broadly diversified portfolios that provide competitive, market-based returns.

#### **MISSION ALIGNMENT**

We seek to invest in companies that reflect our values and empower and amplify our mission.

## STEP TWO | DO NO HARM

Our equity portfolios were invested to avoid exposure to companies in the following areas.



## STEP THREE | DO GOOD

We consider a wide variety of environmental, social, and governance factors in determining the suitability of an investment. As stewards, we believe these considerations are critical to the holistic evaluation of risk and return.

Our portfolios are designed and monitored to increase exposure to companies and industries that demonstrate strong characteristics in five areas of impact.



\* The benchmark referenced here for comparison with the equity portion of the portfolios is a blended equity benchmark composed of 64% CRSP U.S. Large Cap Index, 6% CRSP U.S. Small Cap Index, 25% S&P/BNY Mellon ADR Index, and 5% S&P/BNY Mellon Emerging ADR Index. Impact data provided by Envestnet and Sustainalytics, a third-party firm that provides research, ratings, and analytics. **All data as of 12/31/2023.** 

# Doing Well by Doing Good

Our portfolios are designed and monitored to increase exposure to companies and industries that have a commitment to "doing good" in one of five areas: climate, community, conservation, diversity, and wellness. Each of the companies below have demonstrated – through their products, services, operations, etc. – how sustainability can be integrated into standard business practices.

The companies were chosen based solely on their sustainability practices and not financial performance.

#### CLIMATE







Vestas is a Danish manufacturer, seller, and installer of onshore wind turbines, leading in the space with the highest installed capacity under service in the world. With 45,000 MW installed and 40,000+ MW under service across North America, the company has two reporting segments: power solutions and service, which performs operating and maintenance service work on wind turbines. In 2023, the company secured the largest onshore wind project in the world at 1.1 GW generated from 242 wind turbines.<sup>1</sup>



For 17 years, Target has maintained a commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices, today focusing on four key areas: an inclusive guest experience, an inclusive work environment, a diverse workforce, and driving positive impact on society. DEI is integrated throughout their business lines, including recruitment, hiring, and advancement. They also offer enterprise-wide equity training and unconscious bias training. Along with having a majority-minority workforce across both gender and racial identities, the company prioritizes equity and inclusion through their Design for All program which focuses on designing products for underserved audiences.<sup>2</sup>



NovoCure is an America-based oncology company that develops, manufactures, and sells proprietary cancer therapy Tumor Treating Fields (TTFields) devices for the treatment of solid tumor cancers. TTFields are electric fields that selectively target and kill cancer cells by exerting physical force and sparing healthy cells. The company's pipeline consists of ovarian cancer, pancreatic cancer, non-small cell lung cancer, and brain metastasis. As of January, 2023, more than 27,000 patients have been treated with the firm's cancer therapies.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Sustainalytics, Vestas

<sup>2</sup> Sources: Sustainalytics, Target

<sup>3</sup> Sources: Sustainalytics, NovoCure

The sustainability data is company specific and does not represent sustainability practices or results of any other company. The companies cited were not selected based on their investment performance, size of MMF investment in the company, or any other financial considerations.

# Fiduciary Governance, Process, Certifications

A commitment to fiduciary duty is at the center of our work. As mandated by law, our first priority is to protect the long-term interests of our beneficiaries.

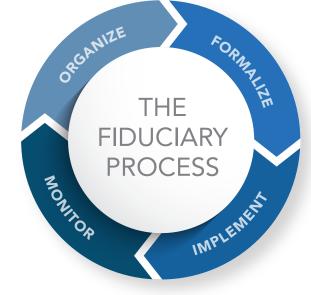
To ensure we meet our fiduciary duty, we work with an investment advisory firm that is both CEFEX Certified and has earned the B Corp Certification. The CEFEX Certification indicates adherence to a global fiduciary standard of excellence, based on case law regulations and best practices. The B Corp Certification indicates adherence to high standards of social and environmental impact.

### ORGANIZE

Governing documents, agreements, and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities are reviewed and clearly defined in writing.

#### MONITOR

Regular reporting compares investment and impact performance with benchmarks and the investment policy.



#### FORMALIZE

Investment objectives, time horizon, risk levels, and return goals are formally established. Asset classes are chosen and the investment policy is updated and reconfirmed.

#### IMPLEMENT

The investment strategy is implemented. Due diligence is conducted to select investment managers. All investment decisions are documented, reviewed, and retained.



#### The CEFEX Seal

The Center for Fiduciary Excellence (CEFEX) is an independent assessment and certification organization with a mission to promote fiduciary best practices in the investment industry. The CEFEX Seal indicates that a firm is certified and can demonstrate adherence to global fiduciary standards and best practices. CEFEX certification is earned through a rigorous and thorough annual audit process. Less than one percent of registered investment advisors are currently CEFEX-certified.



#### The Certified B Corp Seal

The B Corp Certification process measures a company's entire social and environmental impact. Certification means that a company meets high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices. To maintain certification, Certified B Corps must update their B Impact Assessment (BIA) and verify their updated B Impact score every three years.

#### **INDEX DEFINITIONS**

Bloomberg 1-3 year Government/Credit Bond TR Index is a total return index that incorporates bonds in both the Treasury Bond and the Agency Bond Index, as well as U.S. corporate and some foreign debentures and secured notes, with maturities of one to three years.

Bloomberg Global Agg Ex USD TR Hdg Index tracks investment grade government, corporate, agency, and mortgage-related bonds in markets outside the U.S.

**Bloomberg Intermediate U.S. Government/Credit TR Index** is a broad-based flagship benchmark that measures the non-securitized component of the U.S. Aggregate Index with less than 10 years to maturity. The index includes investment grade, U.S. dollar-denominated, fixed-rate treasuries, government-related and corporate securities.

**Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond TR** is an index of U.S. dollar-denominated investmentgrade U.S. corporate, government, and mortgage-backed securities.

**Bloomberg U.S. Corporate High Yield TR Index** measures the USD-denominated, high yield, fixed-rate corporate bond market.

**Bloomberg U.S. Government/Credit TR Index** is a broad-based flagship benchmark that measures the non-securitized component of the U.S. Aggregate Index. The index includes investment grade, U.S. dollar-denominated, fixed-rate treasuries, government-related and corporate securities.

**Bloomberg U.S. Treasury Inflation-Linked TR Index** measures the performance of the U.S. Treasury Inflation Protected Securities (TIPS) market.

**BNYM Dev Market Classic ADR Index** seeks to track developed market-based American depository receipts (ADRs) trading on U.S. stock exchanges, subject to size and liquidity requirements.

**BNYM Emg Mkt Classic ADR Index** is capitalization-weighted and designed to track emerging market-based American depositary receipts (ADRs) trading on U.S. stock exchanges. The index is rebalanced and reconstituted quarterly.

**BOFAML 3-MONTH U.S. T-BILL TR Index** is an index of short-term U.S. Government securities with a remaining term to final maturity of less than three months.

**CRSP U.S. Large Cap Index** includes U.S. companies that comprise the top 85% of investable market capitalization.

**CRSP U.S. Small Cap Index** includes U.S. companies that fall between the bottom 2% –15% of the investable market capitalization.

**Dow Jones Industrial Average** is an unmanaged index of 30 common stocks comprising 30 actively traded blue chip stocks, primarily industrials, and assumes reinvestment of dividends.

**MSCI All Country World Index** is a free float-adjusted market capitalization weighted index designed to measure the equity market performance of developed and emerging markets. It captures large and midcap representation across 23 developed markets and 27 emerging markets countries.

**MSCI EAFE Index** is designed to represent the performance of large- and mid-cap securities across 21 developed markets in Europe, Australasia and the Far East, excluding the U.S. and Canada.

**MSCI Emerging Markets Index** is a free float-adjusted market-capitalization index that is designed to measure equity market performance in the global emerging markets.

**NASDAQ Composite** is a stock market index of the common stocks and similar securities listed on the NASDAQ stock market.

**Russell 1000® TR** is an index that measures the performance of the large-cap segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes approximately 1000 or the largest companies in the Russell 3000® Index based upon a combination of their market cap and current index membership.

**S&P 500 Index** is an unmanaged index comprising 500 widely held U.S. securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general.

**S&P SMALL CAP 600**<sup>®</sup> **TR** is a float-adjusted market capitalization weighted index that is designed to measure the performance of 600 small-sized companies in the U.S.

#### **IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES**

The information, analysis, and opinions contained in this report are for general and educational purposes only. The views expressed are as of the date hereof and may change at any time without notice. Midwest Methodist Foundation assumes no obligation to update or otherwise revise our opinions or this report.

Nothing contained in this report is intended to constitute legal, tax, accounting, securities, or investment advice, nor an opinion regarding the appropriateness of any investment, nor a solicitation of any type. Portfolio and Performance data (on page 4) and Alignment and Impact statistics (on pages 5-8) are provided by Envestnet, Inc. and Breckinridge Capital Advisors. Performance data is unaudited. All ESG data including impact scores are believed to be from reliable sources; however, we make no representation as to accuracy or completeness.

References to indices, benchmarks or other measures of relative market performance over a specified period of time are provided for information only and do not imply that an account will achieve similar results. The index composition may not reflect the manner in which a portfolio is constructed; unlike these indices and benchmarks, a portfolio may contain types of securities that are different than those reflected in these indices and benchmarks and will not be as diversified as these indices and benchmarks. Indices are unmanaged and investors cannot invest directly in indices. The figures for the index reflect the reinvestment of dividends but do not reflect the deduction of any fees or expenses which would reduce returns.

This material is not meant as a recommendation or endorsement of any security or strategy. It is not intended to be a client-specific suitability analysis or recommendation, an offer to participate in any investment, or a recommendation to buy, hold or sell securities. Do not use this report as the sole basis for investment decisions. No assurance can be given that the investment objective of an account will be achieved.

Do not invest based on performance alone. Consider all relevant information, including your existing portfolio, investment objectives, risk tolerance, liquidity needs and investment time horizon. This report is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to predict or guarantee the future performance of any individual security, market sector or the markets generally.

Investment losses, including a loss of principal, may occur from time to time. Nothing herein is intended to imply that an account's investment methodology may be considered "safe," "risk free" or "risk averse."

PAST PERFORMANCE IS NOT AN INDICATOR OR GUARANTEE OF FUTURE RESULTS. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT AN ACCOUNT WILL ACHIEVE COMPARABLE RESULTS TO THOSE SET FORTH IN THIS REPORT OR THAT THEY WILL ACHIEVE THEIR INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES IN THE FUTURE.



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