

**Happy New Year and welcome to 2023!** We hope that you and your family had an enjoyable holiday season. We look forward to what this new year has to offer.

2022 was rough for investors, with many of the year's events unforeseen and unfavorable. As we enter the new year, some challenges remain. One primary obstacle, the concern of elevated inflation, has recently looked a little less imposing, while another concern, a projected recession affecting countries around the globe, is still looming. Seasoned investors understand that part of the investment experience is taking a long-term approach and that means potential periods of downward movements. Our primary goal for the new year is to continue to help optimize our client's journey toward their financial goals. A key component to this is to identify items that they may anticipate needing our assistance with. In order to start the new year proactively, included in this communication is a **2023 Checklist** to help our clients identify items they may want to address with us over the next year.



**We enter 2023 with a service goal of exceeding our client's expectations and providing them with first-class service. We take pride in our ability to understand and effectively respond to their needs and enjoy providing timely information and holistic service to them.** We are thankful for the opportunity to work with them and want to extend the same service to you this new year. Please take the time to review the **2023 Checklist** and call us if you'd like to take advantage of scheduling a complimentary financial check-up.

**In 2023, we will continue to offer the following services to our clients:**

- Client review meetings.
- Quarterly economic updates.
- Tax reports to keep them updated on proactive tax saving opportunities and changes.
- Regularly scheduled live and online educational workshops on timely topics.
- Consistent and meaningful articles on topics that directly affect them.
- Client appreciation events and a special event for clients who support our "Growth Initiative."

***Does your current financial professional provide these services to you?***

The new year is bringing with it changes to monetary policy, including tax law changes that could affect your investment plan. Would you like us to take a second look at your financial situation?

Please call us at **309-966-1425** for a complimentary financial check-up.

## Looking Ahead to 2023

While there are many aspects to overall financial planning, the following are some specific areas we will continue to watch carefully as we head into the new year.

- **Interest Rates** Interest rate movements continue to be critical for investors. In 2022, the Federal Funds Rate rose from a range of 0 – 0.25% to a range of 4.25 – 4.50%. The Federal Reserve has announced they will continue to raise rates to around 5% in 2023 as a way to combat inflation.
- **Inflation** Inflationary concerns are important for investors. In the U.S. during 2022, results for inflation peaked in the fourth quarter and both headline and core Consumer Price Index (CPI) readings showed significant year-over-year declines to end the year. This was the data investors had long been waiting for, and they expressed their approval by sparking quick, but short-lived equity market relief rallies. This initial descent from the inflation summit can be encouraging, but it takes more than one data point to make a trend. Inflation numbers and fears need to be monitored as the 2023 data becomes available.
- **Recession Risk** A main obstacle for investors is that many analysts are suggesting a recession is inevitable. The shift from inflation risk to recession risk reflects the impact of aggressive monetary tightening by the world's central banks, which have fixated on inflation-fighting at the expense of economic growth. Even with inflation starting to moderate (at least in the U.S.), there is no guarantee that central bank policy rates will follow suit. In fact, in November, Fed Chair Jerome Powell conveyed that rates are likely to remain “higher for longer,” which will bring continued challenges to the economy and investment markets. Economic recovery is still appearing to be affected by the overseas effects of Covid-19 and its variants. We will continue to stay apprised of the direction of recovery efforts and how they are affecting the economy.
- **Stock Market Valuations** Valuations are used as key predictors of equity returns. Many stock prices have fallen significantly from historical highs, but in tough times valuations become more challenging to estimate. While we cannot predict long- and short-term valuations, we can continue to help you identify your risk tolerance and time horizons. We will also guide you to use practical behavior during times of market volatility.
- **Our Client's Personal Situations** First and foremost, our client's personal situation is our highest priority. We are here to help them with any financial moves or concerns they may have throughout the year. We understand that each individual and household has different goals and needs. We will continue to keep clients informed of any changes that we think may affect their personal situation.





**We enter 2023 with the continued mantra of “proceed with caution”. Having a solid foundation and strategy is critical to the outcome of your financial plans. Revisiting those plans and keeping them current is also a sound practice we feel should be conducted on a consistent basis. This is a good time to review your plans with us.** We can help you determine if you are on track to meet your long-term objectives, confirm your time horizons and assess your risk tolerance. We are ready to provide you with a complimentary financial check-up. Call us at **309-966-1425** for available dates and times and get ready to make 2023 a positive year on your journey toward your financial goals!

## Help us identify items that you would like addressed in the coming year!

After reviewing this list, please call our office to discuss any items you have checked off. This will help us advise you in the most effective and proactive manner.

- Do you anticipate changes to your investment goals?
- Has your risk tolerance changed?
- Have your 2023 income or savings needs changed?
- Do you plan to retire or change jobs?
- Will there be a change in your marital status?
- Do you plan to move, refinance, or sell/transfer a major asset such as a home or business?
- Did you recently receive or anticipate receiving a gift or inheritance?
- Will you have any changes in your income needs +/- (i.e., vacation, assisted living needs, selling home, child/grandchild assistance)?
- Do you expect any additional family members or dependents?
- Do you anticipate any additional dependents such as an elderly parent or other family member? Will they require assisted living?
- Do you have a child/grandchild you will be assisting with their educational cost needs through a 529 plan?
- Do you anticipate any major transfer of wealth?
- Do you plan on gifting to heirs or donating money to charity?
- Do you need to adjust your estate plan?
- Do you maximize your ability to use retirement plans?
- Do you want to explore converting a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA?
- Do you or a dependent family member have a severe illness?
- Do you anticipate any life, financial, or employment (retiring) changes that may require you to adjust your life and health insurance policies?
- Did you contribute to an IRA? If not, would you like to discuss contributing to an IRA before April's tax deadline?
- Is there anything else we should know to help you plan for 2023?

### Important Birthdays

-  **50** Allows for catch-up contributions to IRAs and qualified retirement plans
-  **55** If you are retired, allows you to take distributions from your 401(k) without the 10% penalty
-  **59½** Allows you to take distributions from an IRA, annuity, or other retirement plan without penalty
-  **60** Allows for start of widow/widower benefits from Social Security
-  **62** Allows for starting early Social Security benefits
-  **65** Allows for enrollment in Medicare and the government drug plan
-  **66-67** Allows for full retirement benefits from Social Security
-  **70** Start date for enhanced Social Security benefits if you deferred claiming benefits previously
-  **70½** Allowed to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from IRA
-  **73** Mandatory required minimum distribution from retirement accounts must be taken no later than April 1st of the year after the year you turn 73

*If you have an important birthday in 2023, please let us know!*

**If you are currently not a client of Clarity Group Midwest, we would like to offer you a complimentary, one-hour, private consultation at absolutely no cost or obligation to you.**

**To schedule your financial check-up, please call Taylor at 309-966-1425 and we would be happy to assist you!**

Securities and Advisory services offered through Ausdal Financial Partners, Inc. 5187 Utica Ridge Rd.,

**Has your advisor reviewed your tax forms to understand how to coordinate your investments with your taxes?**

Yes  No  Not Sure

**Has your advisor discussed tax planning strategies that could help you keep more of what you make?**

Yes  No  Not Sure

**Is your advisor updated and current on tax planning strategies?**

Yes  No  Not Sure

**Has your advisor discussed with you any changes to your situation within the last few months?**

Yes  No  Not Sure

*If you answered **No** or **Not Sure** to any of these questions, please consider scheduling a complimentary meeting with one of our professionals at no cost or obligation to you.*

Securities and Advisory services offered through Ausdal Financial Partners, Inc. 5187 Utica Ridge Rd., Davenport, IA 52807 563.326.2064 Member FINRA/SIPC. Ausdal Financial Partners, Inc. and Clarity Group Midwest are separately owned and operated. Investing involves risk including the potential loss of principal. No investment strategy can guarantee a profit or protect against loss in periods of declining values. This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax, legal, estate or investment planning advice as individual situations will vary.

The views expressed are not necessarily the opinion of Ausdal Financial Partners and should not be construed, directly or indirectly, as an offer to buy or sell securities mentioned herein. All indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. Unmanaged index returns do not reflect fees, expenses, or sales charges. Index performance is not indicative of the performance of any investment. This article is for informational purposes only. Economic forecasts set forth may not develop as predicted and there can be no guarantee that strategies promoted will be successful. This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax, legal or investment planning advice as individual situations will vary. For specific advice about your situation, please consult with a lawyer or financial professional. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. This article provided by The Academy of Preferred Financial Advisors, Inc. ©2023