



Markets Flat in November, but Still Poised to Finish the Year Strong

Although the financial markets wobbled temporarily in November, ending the month about flat, they remain in a good position to finish the year strong. Could that change? And what does January hold in store? We'll get to those questions, but first, let's review.

When November started, there was a lot of concern over the government shutdown. Now that the government has reopened, we're finally getting fresh economic data again. And overall, the numbers look surprisingly solid.

Holiday shopping seems to be off to a strong start. According to preliminary reports, Black Friday spending was up about 9% from last year, and Cyber Monday was up about 4%.¹ That suggests consumers are still spending, even though you may hear stories in the news about people feeling squeezed by the effects of high inflation.

Inflation is now just under 3%, which is historically close to normal. Of course, that doesn't erase the higher prices we've all lived through lately, but it does mean things are stabilizing. Companies are also absorbing a lot of costs behind the scenes (including tariff-re-

lated costs), which helps keep everyday prices steadier. The bottom line is that the overall economic picture appears stable, and spending remains strong.

The Markets

November was a relatively subdued month for the markets. As mentioned, Wall Street finished about flat with the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average eking out modest gains, and the Nasdaq closing slightly in the red for the first time in seven months.²

Interestingly, the stock market barely reacted to the government shutdown, which shows how accustomed investors have become to these temporary disruptions. It was only after the shutdown ended that stocks pulled back a bit, and mostly because some of the tech and AI names that have been running hot are starting to look overvalued.

We talked last month about brewing concerns of a potential tech bubble. But there's a big difference between today's situation and the tech bubble of the late 1990s, which is that most of the big companies driving the market today are actually making money. So, while valuations may be high,

the underlying businesses are stronger than they were in the dot-com era.

Your Portfolios

Despite the markets tapping the brakes in November, they remain in great shape for the year, with the S&P 500 up by about 16%. By comparison, our leading high-dividend yielding stock strategy is up approximately 13% year-to-date, while our most conservative dividend portfolio is up about 7% – both, of course, with more meaningful income.

With our dividend strategies, we are intentionally not chasing speculative growth areas of the market like the tech sector. As with our fixed-income portfolios, our priority remains income first, growth second.

Continued on page 2



**EXPERIENCE
THE ERI DIFFERENCE**

Copyright © Integrated Concepts 2026. Some articles in this newsletter were prepared by Integrated Concepts, a separate, nonaffiliated business entity. This newsletter intends to offer factual and up-to-date information on the subjects discussed, but should not be regarded as a complete analysis of these subjects. The appropriate professional advisers should be consulted before implementing any options presented. No party assumes liability for any loss or damage resulting from errors or omissions or reliance on or use of this material.

ERI Empowerment Resources International - 210 S. Des Plaines Street Unit 0002, Chicago, IL 60661

A+ Rating



Office: 312-724-7755 | Fax: 312-724-8548 | info@ERI.global | www.ERI.global

Markets Stay Strong

Continued from page 1

As for our fixed-income accounts, while every strategy is different, on average, our most conservative portfolio of individual bonds and bond-like instruments is still up about 5.5% for the year, depending on your individual holdings. That keeps us on track to meet our targeted annual return of about 6%. If December follows historical patterns, we should finish the year very close to that goal.

Looking Ahead

Only time will tell how December and January set the tone for 2026. The good news is that, from an economic standpoint, there seems to be no major red flags currently. The biggest uncertainties to watch are geopolitical rather than financial, like ongoing conflicts abroad, shipping disruptions, and the occasional resurfacing of tariff concerns.

So far, U.S. companies appear to be absorbing most tariff-related costs rather than passing them along to consumers, which has helped keep inflation contained. All things considered, it's a largely positive backdrop heading into the new year.

Naturally, we will continue monitoring the markets closely and keep you informed of any major developments. In the meantime, if you have questions, want to review your strategy, or need help with any year-end financial issues, please reach out. We're here for you throughout the holiday season, aside from a few standard office closures.

Enjoy the holidays, and good luck with your shopping — here's hoping you find some great deals!

1 <https://www.cnn.com/2025/12/02/black-friday-cyber-monday-shopping-turnout-nrf.html>

2 <https://www.investopedia.com/dow-jones-today-11282025-11858559>

ERI Revocable Trust Package is a comprehensive package designed to meet all of your estate planning needs.

Included in your package:



Revocable Living Trust

A living trust is a legal document that contains instructions for what you want to happen to your assets when you die. In addition to all of the features and functionality of a will, a living trust can avoid probate at death, control all of your assets, and prevent the court from controlling your assets if you become incapacitated.



Financial Power of Attorney

Your Financial power of attorney names someone to make financial decisions for you when you are not able to do so for yourself. You can name your primary choice and up to 3 back-up choices.



Healthcare Power of Attorney

Your Healthcare Power of Attorney names someone to make healthcare decisions for you when you are not able to do so for yourself. You can name your primary choice and up to 3 back-up choices. It also includes important documents such as state specific Advanced Healthcare Directives.



Assets Package

Within your account is your Assets Package where you will maintain an updated list of all assets. This ensures an easier transfer of your assets after your death, and that no assets are lost.



Printed and Digital Documents

You will receive a Trust binder with printed copies of all of your legal documents as well as several guides. You will also receive digital access to your documents where you can view, print, download, and even amend your documents.



Schedule Your Appointment Now:

Call us at **312-724-7755** to schedule your appointment with Eric K. Williams.

DINE WITH ERI

Thursdays Jan 15th, Feb 19th, Mar 19th

**** Enlightening Dinner Informational ****

5:45 PM - 6:45 PM

RSVP: 312.724.7755 or info@ERI.global

Learn To:

- Create Your Own Bank
- Earn **Uninterrupted** Compound Interest & Dividends
- Reduce Taxes, Build Wealth & Eliminate Interest Payments
- Eliminate **ALL DEBT** Including Mortgages & Student Loan(s), in 9 Years or Less
- Self-Finance Purchases
- Replace Retirement Risk, Fees & Losses with Guarantees
- Receive **Guaranteed** Lifetime Income
- And So Much More!

ERI Empowerment Resources International

210 S Desplaines St Unit 0002
Chicago, IL 60661

Use Conservative Estimates

How can you ensure you'll have sufficient funds to last your entire retirement? So many of the variables used to calculate this amount seem uncertain. What is a reasonable rate of return for your investments over the long term? How long will you live, knowing life expectancies are increasing? How much can you count on from Social Security and pension plans? Some tips to consider include:

- **Assume your retirement income needs to be at least 100% of your current income.** Most rules of thumb indicate you'll need between 70% and 100%, but figure on at least 100% to be safe. Nowadays, retirees want to travel, pursue hobbies, and live an active lifestyle, which generally means you'll need the higher end of these estimates.
- **Add a few years to your life expectancy.** You should probably plan on living until at least age 85 or 90. If your family has a history of longevity, add a few more years to these figures. While you may find it hard to believe you'll live that long, you don't want to reach age 75 or 80 and find out you've run out of money. At that point, you might not be able to return to work.
- **Reduce your estimates of Social Security benefits.** While Social Security is currently in sound financial condition, that is expected to change after all the baby boomers retire. To be safe, count on benefits that are somewhat less than the Social Security Administration is estimating, and don't plan on adjustments for inflation.
- **Cut back on living expenses now.** This has a two-fold impact on your retirement. First, it frees up money to set aside for retirement. Second, you get used to a lower standard of living, which should also reduce your expected lifestyle for retirement.
- **Reach retirement with no debt.** Mortgage and consumer debt payments consume a significant portion of most people's income. Pay off all those debts by retirement and you significantly reduce your cost of living.
- **Forget about early retirement.** Saving enough to last from age 65 to age 85 or 90 is a difficult task. Trying to retire at age 55 or 60 is just not practical for most individuals, unless you're willing to significantly reduce your lifestyle. Working a few more years can go a long way in helping to fund your retirement. Those years are typically your highest earning years, so hopefully you'll save significant sums during that period. Also, every year you work is one year you don't have to support yourself with your retirement savings.
- **Consider working during retirement.** Especially during the early years of retirement, you should consider working at least on a part-time basis. Even modest earnings can help significantly with retirement expenses.
- **Plan on taking conservative withdrawals from your retirement assets.** Don't plan on taking out more than 3% to 4% of your balance annually. Your funds should last for decades with that level of withdrawal.

If you'd like to review your retirement plans in more detail, please call. ■■■

ERI Empowerment Resources International - 210 S. Des Plaines Street Unit 0002, Chicago, IL 60661



Office: 312-724-7755 | Fax: 312-724-8548 | info@ERI.global | www.ERI.global



Reduce Taxes, Build Wealth & Eliminate Interest Payments!

Empowerment Resources International Presents:

Building a Smarter Financial Plan for Your Future

Tuesday Evening via Zoom - 6:15-7:00 PM CST!

Please Scan to Register



This session will cover:

- How to create a clear plan of action for your financial goals
- Strategies for a stronger, more secure retirement
- How life insurance can be used for living benefits, not just death benefits
- Ways financial tools can support wealth while you're living
- What The 1% Do That You Can & Should too!

This is an informational event designed to educate—not sell. No pressure, no recruiting, just practical insight to help you make more confident financial decisions*




312.724.7755

www.ERI.global



Eric K. Williams

ERI Empowerment Resources International | 210 S. Des Plaines Street, Unit 0002, Chicago, IL 60661



TOP OF THE TABLE

MDRT

The Premier Association of Financial Professionals®



Empowerment Resources International

GET EDUCATED EMPOWERED & EQUIPPED TO WIN!

Experience the ERI Difference

INSURANCE

LIFE
LONG-TERM CARE
DISABILITY INCOME

CREATE YOUR OWN BANK

DIRECT YOUR DOLLAR TO DO 2 JOBS
UNINTERRUPTED COMPOUND INTEREST
GUARANTEED GROWTH
TAX FREE ACCESS TO CASH
PAID OFF MORTGAGE(S) & STUDENT LOAN(S)
SELF-FINANCE PURCHASES

IRA/Annuity

Sep IRA
ROTH IRA
TRADITIONAL IRA
Tax Deferred Annuity

ROLLOVERS

PENSION, 401(K)
DEFERRED COMP
403(B) & TSP
GUARANTEED LIFETIME INCOME

ESTATE PLANNING SERVICES

REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST PACKAGE



TAKE ACTION NOW!

312.724.7755

ERI 210 S. Des Plaines Street, Unit 0002, Chicago, IL 60661

Building Your Retirement Income For Today's Economy!

Thursday Evening Zoom: 6:15-7:00PM CST

Please Scan to
Register/Join



Learn How Our Philosophy Keeps Your Hard-Earned Income Protected & Growing!

ROLLOVERS

- **S**afety
- **T**ax Deferred
- **Y**ield
- **L**iquidity
- **E**state Advantages
- Pension, 401k
- Deferred Comp
- 403(B), & TSP
- Guaranteed Lifetime Income
- **S**leep
- **W**ell
- **A**t
- **N**ight



ENJOY GUARANTEED LIFETIME INCOME!

312.724.7755

ERI Empowerment Resources International 210 S. Des Plaines Street Unit 0002, Chicago, IL 60661



ENJOY THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

- Linked Market Growth
- Protection From Market Volatility, Fee Structure & Losses!

TOP OF THE TABLE



Who We Are:

Empowerment Resources **International** Corp., (A+ Rated and Complaint Free, per the Better Business Bureau, MBE Certified with the City of Chicago and Cook County Government), Independent Advisors Offering Insurance and Financial Planning Services. Based in the West Loop Gate District of Chicago, We Proudly Service Individuals and Families Across the Country with a Mission to Build Long-Term Financial Security. Eric K. Williams is the President of ERI and a Member of the National Association of Insurance & Financial Advisors (NAIFA). He is a **Qualifying Life Member** with **Honor Roll & Top of the Table** Status in the Million Dollar Round Table, MDRT, the Premier Global Association of Financial Professionals®.

What We Do:

We Provide Solutions to Address the Systemic Root Causes of Inadequate Financial Freedom in America (Taxation, Interest Payments, Unknown Excessive Fee-Structure).

Using Our Knowledge along with our Combined Experience and Proprietary Technology, We Help Our Clients Achieve Their Goals. Those Goals Include: **Creating** their Own Bank, Directing their Dollar to Accomplish at least Two Jobs Instead of One; Eliminating **ALL** Debt including their Mortgage and Student Loans, in 9 Years or Less; & Self-Finance Purchases.

We Teach Our Clients to Use Time Committed Vehicles that Eliminate Risk & Fee Structure; Thus, Replacing Retirement Risk, Fees & Losses with **Guarantees & Lifetime Income**.

UNIQUE PROBLEMS SOLVED FOR OUR CLIENTS:

- Avg. Family Pays \$155k in Hidden Wall Street Fees, (Frontline "The Retirement Gamble" 4/13), (ABC World News, 5/12)
- The real Interest on Mortgages and Student Loans is 60-100%, not the advertised rate 2-7% that we're misled to be paying
- U.S. Census Bureau statistics show that 74 cents out of every dollar coming into the Household goes to Interest & Taxes.

210 S DESPLAINES ST
UNIT 0002
CHICAGO, IL 60661

