

**LKCM FUNDS**  
**LKCM AQUINAS CATHOLIC EQUITY FUND (AQEIX)**  
**301 COMMERCE STREET, SUITE 1600**  
**FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102**  
**STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

May 1, 2026

This Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”) is not a prospectus and should be read in conjunction with the Prospectus of the LKCM Aquinas Catholic Equity Fund (the “Fund”), a series of LKCM Funds (the “Trust”) dated May 1, 2026, as such Prospectus may be supplemented or revised from time to time. A copy of the Prospectus may be obtained without charge by calling the Fund at (800) 423-6369 or by visiting [www.aquinasfunds.com](http://www.aquinasfunds.com).

The Fund’s audited financial statements and accompanying notes for the year ended December 31, 2025 are [incorporated herein by reference](#) to Item 7 of the Fund’s Form N-CSR for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025. A copy of the Annual and Semi-Annual Reports, and financial statements and accompanying notes, may be obtained without charge by calling the Fund at (800) 423-6369 or by visiting [www.aquinasfunds.com](http://www.aquinasfunds.com).

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In deciding whether to invest in the Fund, you should rely on information in this SAI and the Prospectus. The Fund has not authorized others to provide additional information in any state or jurisdiction in which such offering may not legally be made.

Luther King Capital Management Corporation (the “Adviser”) serves as the investment adviser for the Fund.

## FUND ORGANIZATION

### DESCRIPTION OF SHARES AND VOTING RIGHTS

The LKCM Funds (the “Trust”) is an open-end, diversified, management investment company. The Fund is a diversified and separate series of the Trust, a Delaware statutory trust that was established by a Declaration of Trust dated February 10, 1994 (as amended, the “Declaration of Trust”). The Declaration of Trust permits the Trustees of the Trust to issue an unlimited number of shares of beneficial interest, without par value, from an unlimited number of series. Currently, the Trust offers seven series, one of which is the LKCM Aquinas Catholic Equity Fund (the “Fund”). This SAI relates only to the Fund.

Pursuant to the Declaration of Trust, the Trustees may also authorize the creation of additional series (the proceeds of which would be invested in separate, independently managed funds with distinct investment objectives and policies and share purchase, redemption and net asset valuation procedures) with such preferences, privileges, limitations and voting and dividend rights as the Trustees may determine. All consideration received by the Trust for shares of any additional series, and all assets in which such consideration is invested, would belong to that series only and would be subject to the liabilities related thereto.

When issued, the shares of the Fund are fully paid and non-assessable, have no preemptive or subscription rights and are fully transferable. There are no conversion rights. Each share of the Fund is entitled to participate equally in dividends and capital gain distributions and in the assets of the Fund in the event of liquidation. The shares of the Fund have non-cumulative voting rights, which means that the holders of more than 50% of the shares voting for the election of Trustees can elect 100% of the Trustees if they choose to do so. A shareholder is entitled to one vote for each full share held (and a fractional vote for each fractional share held), then standing in the shareholder’s name on the books of the Fund.

The Fund is not required, and does not intend, to hold regular annual shareholder meetings. The Fund may hold special meetings for consideration of proposals requiring shareholder approval, such as changing fundamental policies. The Trust will assist in shareholder communication in such matters to the extent required by law.

### REORGANIZATION

Effective as of the close of business on July 29, 2016, the LKCM Aquinas Small Cap Fund and the LKCM Aquinas Growth Fund, each a series of the Trust, were reorganized into the LKCM Aquinas Value Fund, another series of the Trust. Immediately thereafter, the LKCM Aquinas Value Fund changed its name to the LKCM Aquinas Catholic Equity Fund and the LKCM Aquinas Value Fund’s investment strategies and operating expenses, including its expense limitation agreement, changed to the investment strategies and operating expenses, including the expense limitation agreement, of the LKCM Aquinas Catholic Equity Fund. Financial and other historical information presented herein for periods prior to August 1, 2016 reflects the operations of the LKCM Aquinas Value Fund, and all other information presented herein reflects the operations of the LKCM Aquinas Catholic Equity Fund.

### SHAREHOLDER AND TRUSTEE LIABILITY

The Declaration of Trust contains an express disclaimer of shareholder liability for acts or obligations of the Trust and requires that notice of such disclaimer be given in each agreement, obligation, or instrument entered into or executed by the Trust or the Trustees, but this disclaimer may not be effective in some jurisdictions or as to certain types of claims. The Declaration of Trust further provides for indemnification out of the Trust’s property of any shareholder held personally liable for the obligations of the Trust. The Declaration of Trust also provides that the Trust shall, upon request, assume the defense of any claim made against any shareholder for any act or obligation of the Trust and satisfy any judgment thereon. Thus, the risk of a shareholder incurring financial loss on account of shareholder liability is limited to circumstances in which the Trust itself would be unable to meet its obligations.

The Declaration of Trust further provides that the Trustees will not be liable for errors of judgment or mistakes of fact or law, but nothing in the Declaration of Trust protects a Trustee against any liability to which he would otherwise be subject by reason of willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence, or reckless disregard of the duties involved in the conduct of the office.

### INVESTMENT LIMITATIONS

The Fund is subject to the following restrictions, which are fundamental policies and may not be changed with respect to the Fund without the approval of a majority of the Fund’s outstanding voting securities. As used herein, a “majority of the Fund’s outstanding voting securities” means the lesser of: (1) at least 67% of the voting securities of the Fund present at a meeting if the holders of more than 50% of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund are present or represented by proxy, or (2) more than 50% of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund.

As a matter of fundamental policy, the Fund will not:

- (1) invest in physical commodities or contracts on physical commodities;
- (2) purchase or sell real estate, although it may purchase and sell securities of companies that deal in real estate, other than real estate limited partnerships, and may purchase and sell marketable securities that are secured by interests in real estate;
- (3) make loans except: (i) by purchasing debt securities in accordance with its investment objective and policies or entering into repurchase agreements; or (ii) by lending its portfolio securities to banks, brokers, dealers and other financial institutions, so long as such loans are not inconsistent with the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “1940 Act”), or the rules and regulations or interpretations of the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”) thereunder;
- (4) with respect to 75% of its assets, purchase more than 10% of any class of the outstanding voting securities of any issuer;
- (5) with respect to 75% of its assets, invest more than 5% of its total assets in the securities of any single issuer (other than obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government or any of its agencies or instrumentalities);

- (6) borrow money, except (i) from banks and as a temporary measure for extraordinary or emergency purposes (not for leveraging or investment) or (ii) in connection with reverse repurchase agreements provided that (i) and (ii) in combination do not exceed 33 1/3% of the Fund's total assets (including the amount borrowed) less liabilities (exclusive of borrowings);
- (7) underwrite the securities of other issuers (except to the extent that the Fund may be deemed to be an underwriter within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act") in the disposition of restricted securities);
- (8) acquire any securities of companies within one industry if, as a result of such acquisition, more than 25% of the Fund's total assets would be invested in securities of companies within such industry; provided, however, that there shall be no limitation on the purchase of obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies or instrumentalities; and
- (9) issue senior securities, except that this limitation shall not apply to: (i) evidences of indebtedness that the Fund is permitted to incur; (ii) shares of the separate classes or series of the Trust; or (iii) collateral arrangements with respect to currency-related contracts, futures contracts, options or other permitted investments, including deposits of initial and variation margin.

With the exception of fundamental investment limitation (6) above if a percentage limitation on the investment or utilization of assets as set forth above is adhered to at the time an investment is made, a later change in percentage resulting from changes in the value of the investment or the Fund's assets will not require the sale of securities.

The Fund is also subject to the following restrictions, which are non-fundamental policies and may be changed by the Board of Trustees of the Trust (the "Board of Trustees") without shareholder approval. As a matter of non-fundamental policy, the Fund will not:

- (1) purchase securities on margin, except for use of short-term credit as may be necessary for the clearance of purchases and sales of securities, but it may make margin deposits in connection with transactions in options, futures, and options on futures; or sell securities short unless, by virtue of its ownership of other securities, it has the right to obtain securities equivalent in kind and amount to the securities sold and, if the right is conditional, the sale is made upon the same conditions. Transactions in futures contracts, options and options on futures are not deemed to constitute selling securities short;
- (2) pledge, mortgage, or hypothecate any of its assets to an extent greater than 33 1/3% of its total assets at fair market value;
- (3) invest more than an aggregate of 15% of the net assets of the Fund in securities deemed to be illiquid, including securities which are not readily marketable, the disposition of which is restricted (excluding securities that are not registered under the Securities Act but which can be sold to qualified institutional investors in accordance with Rule 144A under the Securities Act and commercial paper sold in reliance on Section 4(2) of the Securities Act), repurchase agreements having maturities of more than seven days and certain over-the-counter options;
- (4) invest its assets in securities of any investment company, except by purchase in the open market involving only customary brokers' commissions or in connection with mergers, acquisitions of assets or consolidations, or except as may otherwise be permitted by the 1940 Act;
- (5) write or acquire options or interests in oil, gas or other mineral exploration or development programs or leases; and
- (6) make any change in its investment policy of investing at least 80% of its net assets in equity securities without first providing the Fund's shareholders with at least 60 days' prior notice.

### **INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

The investment objectives and policies of the Fund are described in detail in the summary prospectus under the caption "Principal Investment Strategies" and in the statutory prospectus under the caption "Additional Information Regarding the Investment Objectives and Principal Investment Strategies of the Fund." These sections provide a description of the securities in which the Fund principally may invest to achieve its investment objective, the principal strategies it may employ and the corresponding risks of such securities and strategies. The greatest risk of investing in the Fund is that its returns will fluctuate and you could lose money. Both domestic and foreign equity markets could experience volatility and turmoil.

### **EQUITY RELATED SECURITIES**

The equity securities in which the Fund may invest include American Depositary Receipts ("ADRs"), common stocks, securities convertible into common stock ("convertible securities"), preferred stocks, shares of real estate investment trusts ("REITs"), rights and warrants.

**ADRs.** ADRs are depositary receipts for foreign issuers in registered form traded in U.S. securities markets. ADRs are not considered to be foreign securities when calculating the Fund's foreign securities limitations, but such securities may be subject to many of the same risks as foreign securities. ADRs may be listed on a national securities exchange or may trade in the over-the-counter market. ADR prices are denominated in U.S. dollars; the underlying security is denominated in a foreign currency. ADRs may not be denominated in the same currency as the securities into which they may be converted. Investing in depositary receipts entails substantially the same risks as direct investment in foreign securities. There is generally less publicly available information about foreign companies and there may be less governmental regulation and supervision of foreign stock exchanges, brokers and listed companies. In addition, such companies may use different accounting and financial standards (and certain currencies may become unavailable for transfer from a foreign currency), resulting in the Fund's possible inability to convert immediately into U.S. currency proceeds realized upon the sale of portfolio securities of the affected foreign companies. The issuers of unsponsored depositary receipts generally are not obligated to disclose material information about the underlying securities to investors in the United States.

Ownership of unsponsored depositary receipts may not entitle the Fund to the same benefits and rights as ownership of a sponsored depositary receipt or the underlying security. Please see “Foreign and Emerging Market Securities” below for a description of the risks associated with investments in foreign securities.

**Common Stocks.** Common stocks represent the residual ownership interest in the issuer and are generally subordinate to all of its other obligations, including preferred stock. Common stocks generally have voting rights. Common stocks fluctuate in price in response to many factors including historical and prospective earnings of the issuer, the value of its assets, factors affecting companies in the same industry or sector, general economic conditions, interest rates, currency exchange rates, investor perceptions and market liquidity. The price of a company’s stock may also be affected by changes in financial markets that are relatively unrelated to the particular company, such as currency exchange rates or industry regulation. Companies that elect to pay dividends on their common stock generally only do so after they invest in their own business and make required payments to bondholders and on other debt and preferred stock. Therefore, the value of a company’s common stock will usually be more volatile than its bonds, other debt and preferred stock. Common stock may be exchange-traded or traded over-the-counter (“OTC”). OTC stock may be less liquid than exchange-traded stock. In the event of an issuer’s bankruptcy, there is a substantial risk that there will be nothing left to pay common stockholders after payments, if any, to bondholders and preferred stockholders have been made.

**Convertible Securities.** A convertible security is a bond, debenture, note, preferred stock or other security or debt obligation that entitles the holder to acquire a prescribed amount of common stock or other equity securities of the same or a different issuer within a particular period of time at a specified price or formula. A convertible security generally entitles the holder to receive interest paid or accrued until the convertible security matures or is redeemed, converted or exchanged. Before conversion, convertible securities have characteristics similar to nonconvertible debt securities, and generally have features of, and risks associated with, both equity and fixed income instruments. Convertible securities rank senior to common stock in a corporation’s capital structure and, therefore, may entail less risk than the corporation’s common stock, although the extent to which such risk is reduced depends in large measure upon the degree to which the convertible security sells above its value as a fixed income security. The market value of convertible securities tends to decline as interest rates increase and, conversely, to increase as interest rates decline. While convertible securities generally offer lower interest or dividend yields than non-convertible debt securities of similar quality, they do enable the investor to benefit from increases in the market price of the underlying common stock. Holders of convertible securities have a claim on the assets of the issuer prior to the common stockholders but may be subordinated to holders of similar non-convertible securities of the same issuer. A convertible security may be subject to redemption at the option of the issuer at a predetermined price. If a convertible security held by the Fund is called for redemption, the Fund would be required to permit the issuer to redeem the security and convert it to underlying common stock, or would sell the convertible security to a third party.

**Preferred Stocks.** Preferred stock generally offers a stated dividend rate payable from the corporation’s earnings. These preferred stock dividends may be cumulative or non-cumulative, participating, or auction rate. If interest rates rise, the fixed dividend on preferred stocks may be less attractive, causing the price of preferred stocks to decline. Preferred stock may have mandatory sinking fund provisions, as well as call/redemption provisions prior to maturity, a negative feature when interest rates decline. The rights of preferred stocks are generally subordinate to rights associated with a corporation’s debt securities. Dividends on some preferred stock may be “cumulative” if stated dividends from prior periods have not been paid. Preferred stock also generally has a preference over common stock on the distribution of a corporation’s assets in the event of liquidation of the corporation, and may be “participating,” which means that it may be entitled to a dividend exceeding the stated dividend in certain cases.

**Real Estate Investment Trusts.** The Fund may invest in shares of REITs. Equity REITs invest in income-producing real estate. They produce income from rental and lease payments as well as occasional sales of property. Mortgage REITs make construction, development, and long-term mortgage loans. They produce income from repayment of the loans and sales of the loan obligations. Hybrid REITs may invest in both real estate and real estate loans.

Unlike most corporations (and trusts and associations otherwise taxable as such for federal tax purposes), REITs do not have to pay federal income tax on net income and net realized gains they distribute to their shareholders if they meet certain requirements of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. To qualify for that treatment, a REIT must, among other things, (1) distribute to its shareholders for each taxable year at least 90% of the sum of its “real estate investment trust taxable income” (which includes all net realized capital gains) and certain other income and (2) derive at least 75% of its gross income each taxable year from rents from real property, interest on mortgages secured by real property, gains from the disposition of real property or such mortgages, and certain other real estate related income. The failure of a company in which the Fund invests to qualify for treatment as a REIT under federal tax law may have an adverse impact on the Fund. REITs generally offer investors greater liquidity and diversification than direct ownership of real estate, as well as greater income potential than an investment in common stocks.

REITs are subject to real estate industry risk. These risks may include the following: declines in the value of real estate; risks related to general and local economic conditions; possible lack of availability of mortgage funds; lack of ability to access the credit or capital markets; overbuilding; extended vacancies of properties; defaults by borrowers or tenants, particularly during an economic downturn; increasing competition; increases in property taxes and operating expenses; changes in zoning laws; losses due to costs resulting from the clean-up of environmental problems; liability to third parties for damages resulting from environmental problems; casualty or condemnation losses; regulatory limitations on rents and operating expenses; changes in market and sub-market values and the appeal of properties to tenants; and changes in interest rates. In general, real estate values can be affected by a variety of factors, including supply and demand for properties, the economic health of the country as well as different regions, and the strength of specific industries that rent properties. Ultimately, an individual REIT’s performance depends on the types and locations for the properties it owns and on how well the REIT manages its properties. For instance, rental income could decline because of extended vacancies, increased competition from nearby properties, tenants’ failures to pay rent, or incompetent management. Property values could decrease because of overbuilding in the area, environmental liabilities, uninsured damages caused by natural disasters, a general decline in the neighborhood, losses due to casualty or condemnation, increases in property taxes, or changes in zoning laws. Any domestic REIT could be adversely affect by the failure of a REIT to qualify for federal income-tax-free “pass-through” of net income and net realized gains that are distributed to shareholders and exemption from registration as an investment company. The failure of a company to qualify for treatment as a REIT under the federal tax law likely would have an adverse impact on a Fund’s after-tax performance.

REITs are also subject to interest rate risk. REIT stock prices overall will decline over short or even long periods in an environment of rising interest rates. In general, during periods of high interest rates, REITs may lose some of their appeal for investors who may be able to obtain higher yields from other income-producing investments. Higher interest rates also mean that financing for real estate purchases and improvements may be more costly and difficult to obtain.

REITs tend to be small or medium-size companies. Because small and mid-cap stocks are typically less liquid than large-cap stocks, REIT stocks may sometimes experience greater share-price fluctuation than the stocks of larger companies. REITs are pooled investment vehicles with their own fees and expenses and the Fund will indirectly bear its proportionate share of those fees and expenses, which can be significant.

**Rights and Warrants.** Rights and warrants are options to purchase equity securities at specific prices valid for a specific period of time. Their prices do not necessarily move parallel to the prices of the underlying securities. Rights are similar to warrants but normally have a short duration and are distributed by the issuer to its shareholders. Warrants and rights have no voting rights, receive no dividends and have no rights with respect to the assets of the issuer. The percentage increase or decrease in the value of a warrant may be greater than the percentage increase or decrease in the value of the underlying equity security. The market for warrants or rights may be very limited and it may be difficult to sell them promptly at an acceptable price.

**Securities Subject to Special Situations.** The Fund may invest in equity securities for which a tender or exchange offer has been made or announced and in securities of companies for which a merger, consolidation, bankruptcy, liquidation, restructuring or reorganization proposal or other unusual event has been announced or is anticipated. The primary risk of such investments is that if the contemplated transaction is abandoned, revised, delayed or becomes subject to uncertainty, the market price of the securities may decline below the purchase price paid by a Fund. Generally, securities which are the subject of such an offer or proposal sell at a premium to their historic market price immediately prior to the announcement of the offer or may also discount what the stated or appraised value of the security would be if the contemplated transaction were approved or consummated. Such investments may be advantageous when the discount significantly overstates the risk of the contingencies involved, significantly undervalues the securities, assets or cash to be received by shareholders of the target company as a result of the contemplated transaction, or fails adequately to recognize the possibility that the offer or proposal may be replaced or superseded by an offer or proposal of greater value.

The evaluation of such contingencies requires broad knowledge and experience on the part of the Adviser which must appraise not only the value of the issuer and its component businesses as well as the assets or securities to be received as a result of the contemplated transaction but also the financial resources and business motivation of the offeror and the dynamics and business and regulatory climate when the offer or proposal is in process. It may be difficult to obtain complete financial or other information about companies involved in certain special situations and management of such companies may be addressing a situation with which it has little experience. Since such investments are ordinarily short-term in nature, they will tend to increase the turnover ratio of the Fund thereby increasing its brokerage and other transaction expenses and be more speculative. Conversely, the terms of certain special situation investments may be subject to restrictions that prevent the Fund from selling the position until the special situation is largely resolved, which may limit the Fund's ability to pursue other opportunities as they arise.

## **FOREIGN AND EMERGING MARKET SECURITIES**

**Foreign Securities.** The Fund may invest in securities of foreign issuers. The Fund's investment in a foreign issuer may subject the Fund to regulatory, political, currency, security, economic and other risks associated with that country, including tariffs, trade disputes, or the imposition of economic and other sanctions by the U.S. or another country against a particular country, as well as competition from subsidized foreign competitors with lower production costs. In certain countries, legal remedies available to investors may be more limited than those available with respect to investments in the U.S. and investors may encounter difficulties in enforcing contractual obligations. Individual foreign companies also may differ favorably or unfavorably from U.S. companies in the same industry. Investing in foreign issuers involves certain special considerations that are not typically associated with investing in securities of U.S. issuers. Since the securities of foreign issuers are frequently denominated in foreign currencies, and since the Fund may temporarily hold invested reserves in bank deposits in foreign currencies, the Fund will be affected favorably or unfavorably by changes in currency rates and in exchange control regulations, and may incur costs in connection with conversions between various currencies. Foreign currencies will fluctuate, and may decline, in value relative to the U.S. dollar and affect the Fund's investments in foreign currencies or in securities that trade in, and receive revenues in foreign currencies.

As foreign companies are not generally subject to uniform accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards and practices comparable to those applicable to domestic companies, there may be less publicly available information about certain foreign companies than about domestic companies. Securities of some foreign companies are generally less liquid and more volatile than securities of comparable domestic companies. There is generally less government supervision and regulation of stock exchanges, brokers and listed companies than in the U.S. In addition, with respect to certain foreign countries, there is the possibility of expropriation or confiscatory taxation, political or social instability, or diplomatic developments that could affect U.S. investments in those countries. Trading practices, including those involving the release of assets in advance of payment, may involve increased risks in the event of a failed trade or the insolvency of a broker-dealer, and may involve substantial delays. Additionally, trading in foreign markets generally involves higher transaction costs than trading in U.S. markets. Although the Fund will endeavor to achieve most favorable execution costs in its portfolio transactions, fixed commissions on many foreign stock exchanges are generally higher than negotiated commissions on U.S. exchanges. In addition, it is expected that the expenses for custodian arrangements of the Fund's foreign securities will be somewhat greater than the expenses for the custodian arrangements for handling U.S. securities of equal value, especially for emerging market securities. Foreign markets have different clearance and settlement procedures. In certain markets, there have been times when settlements have been unable to keep pace with the volume of securities transactions, making it difficult to conduct such transactions. Delays in settlement could result in temporary periods when a portion of the assets of the Fund is not invested and no return is earned thereon. The inability of the Fund to make intended security purchases due to settlement problems could cause the Fund to miss attractive investment opportunities. The inability of the Fund to dispose of portfolio securities due to settlement problems could result in losses to the Fund due to subsequent declines in value of the securities or, if the Fund has entered into a contract to sell the securities, could result in possible liability to the purchaser.

Interest rates prevailing in other countries may affect the prices of foreign securities and exchange rates for foreign currencies. Local factors, including the strength of the local economy, the demand for borrowing, the government's fiscal and monetary policies, and the international balance of payments, often affect interest rates in other countries. Individual foreign economies may differ favorably or unfavorably from the U.S. economy in such respects as growth of gross national product, rate of inflation, capital reinvestment, resource self-sufficiency, and balance of payments position.

The Fund's income and gains from investments in non-U.S. issuers may be subject to non-U.S. withholding or other taxes, thereby reducing its income and gains. Certain foreign governments levy withholding or other taxes against dividend and interest income paid by citizens or corporations operating therein to investors from other countries. Although in some countries a portion of these taxes are recoverable, the non-recovered portion of those taxes will reduce the Fund's income received from an issuer subject thereto.

Investing in foreign securities may involve a greater risk for excessive trading due to "time-zone arbitrage." If an event occurring after the close of a foreign market, but before the time the Fund computes its current NAV, causes a change in the price of the foreign securities and such price is not reflected in the Fund's current NAV, investors may attempt to take advantage of anticipated price movements in securities held by the Fund based on such pricing discrepancies.

**Securities of European Issuers.** The Fund's performance may be affected by political, social and economic conditions in Europe, such as the growth of the economic output (the gross national product of the countries in the region), the rate of inflation, the rate at which capital is reinvested into European economies, the success of governmental actions to reduce budget deficits, the resource self-sufficiency of European countries, interest rates in European countries, monetary exchange rates between European countries, and conflict between European countries.

The Economic and Monetary Union ("EMU") of the European Union ("EU") is comprised of EU members that have adopted the euro currency. By adopting the euro as its currency, a member state relinquishes control of its own monetary policies and is subject to fiscal and monetary controls. The EMU requires Eurozone countries to comply with restrictions on interest rates, deficits, debt levels, and inflation rates, fiscal and monetary controls, and other factors. Although the EMU has adopted a common currency and central bank, there is no fiscal union; therefore, money does not automatically flow from countries with surpluses to those with deficits. These restrictions and characteristics may limit the ability of EMU member countries to implement monetary policy to address regional economic conditions and significantly impact every European country and their economic partners, including those countries that are not members of the EMU. In addition, those EU member states that are not currently in the Eurozone (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Sweden), excluding Denmark, are required to seek to comply with convergence criteria to permit entry to the Eurozone. The economies and markets of European countries are often closely connected and interdependent, and events in one country in Europe can have an adverse impact on other European countries. Decreasing imports or exports, changes in governmental or other regulations on trade, changes in the exchange rate of the euro or other European currency, the threat of default or actual default by one or more EU member countries, or other European countries, on its sovereign debt, and/or an economic recession in one or more European countries may have a significant adverse effect on the economies of other European countries and major trading partners outside Europe.

The European financial markets have experienced and may continue to experience volatility and adverse trends due to concerns relating to economic downturns; rising government debt levels and national unemployment; the possible default of government debt in several European countries; public health crises; political unrest; economic sanctions; inflation; energy crises; the future of the euro as a common currency; and war and military conflict, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These events have adversely affected the exchange rate of the euro and may continue to significantly affect European countries. Responses to financial problems by European governments, central banks, and others, including austerity measures and other reforms, may not produce the desired results, may result in social unrest and may limit future growth and economic recovery or may have unintended consequences. In order to prevent further economic deterioration, certain countries, without prior warning, can institute "capital controls." Countries may use these controls to restrict volatile movements of capital entering and exiting their country. Such controls may negatively affect the Fund's investments. In addition, one or more countries may abandon the euro and/or withdraw from the EU. The impact of these actions, especially if they occur in a disorderly fashion, could be significant and far-reaching. Many European nations are susceptible to economic risks associated with high levels of debt. Non-governmental issuers, and even certain governments, have defaulted on, or been forced to restructure, their debts, and other issuers have faced difficulties obtaining credit or refinancing existing obligations. A default or debt restructuring by any European country could adversely impact holders of that country's debt and sellers of credit default swaps linked to that country's creditworthiness, which may be located in other countries. Such a default or debt restructuring could affect exposures to other European countries and their financial companies as well. Further defaults on, or restructurings of, the debt of governments or other entities could have additional adverse effects on economies, financial markets and asset valuations around the world. In addition, issuers may face difficulties obtaining credit or refinancing existing obligations; financial institutions may require government or central bank support, or need to raise capital, and/or be impaired in their ability to extend credit. Furthermore, certain European countries have had to accept assistance from supranational agencies such as the International Monetary Fund, the European Stability Mechanism or others. The European Central Bank has also intervened to purchase Eurozone debt in an attempt to stabilize markets and reduce borrowing costs. There can be no assurance that any creditors or supranational agencies will continue to intervene or provide further assistance, and markets may react adversely to any expected reduction in the financial support provided by these creditors. Certain European countries have also developed increasingly strained relationships with the U.S., and if these relationships were to worsen, they could adversely affect European issuers that rely on the U.S. for trade.

In addition, the national politics of European countries have been unpredictable and subject to influence by disruptive political groups, ideologies, and polarizing political events such as the conflict between Israel and Hamas. Secessionist movements, as well as government or other responses to such movements, may create instability and uncertainty in a country or region. European governments may be subject to change and such countries may experience social and political unrest. Unanticipated or sudden political or social developments may result in sudden and significant investment losses. The occurrence of terrorist incidents throughout Europe and in the Middle East also could impact financial markets, as could military conflicts. For example, Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and retaliatory action, may disrupt supply chains and cause difficulties for impacted businesses, including those that wish to ship goods through that route. The impact of these kinds of events could be significant and far-reaching and materially impact the value and liquidity of the Fund's investments. Russia's war with Ukraine has

negatively impacted European economic activity. Additionally, Russia may continue to attempt to assert its influence in the European region through economic or even military measures. The Russia/Ukraine war and Russia's response to sanctions imposed by the U.S. and other countries are impossible to predict, but have severely impacted the performance of the economies of European and other countries, including through adverse effects to global financial and energy markets, global supply chains and global growth, and consequential inflation.

Certain countries have applied to become new member countries of the EU, and these candidate countries' accessions may become more controversial to the existing EU members. Some member states may repudiate certain candidate countries joining the EU due to concerns about the possible economic, immigration and cultural implications. Certain other countries have applied to join or, in the case of Finland and Sweden, have recently joined, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ("NATO"). Russia is understood to oppose certain expansions, or potential expansions, of NATO and the EU, and its reaction to such developments could negatively impact European economic activity. The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union on January 31, 2020. The United Kingdom and the European Union have reached an agreement on the terms of their future trading relationship, which principally relates to the trading of goods rather than services, including financial services. Notwithstanding this agreement, the longer-term economic, legal, and political framework between the United Kingdom and the EU may lead to ongoing political and economic uncertainty in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the global market. Investments in companies with significant operations and/or assets in the United Kingdom could be adversely impacted by past or future changes to the legal, political, and regulatory environment, whether by increased costs or impediments to the implementation of business plans. The uncertainty resulting from any further exits from the EU, or the possibility of such exits, would also be likely to cause market disruption in the EU and more broadly across the global economy, as well as introduce further legal, political, and regulatory uncertainty in Europe.

**Emerging Market Investments.** Investing in emerging markets can have more risk than investing in developed foreign markets, such as (i) low or non-existent trading volume, resulting in a lack of liquidity and increased volatility in prices for such securities, as compared to securities from more developed markets, (ii) uncertain national policies and social, political and economic instability, increasing the potential for expropriation of assets, confiscatory taxation, high rates of inflation or unfavorable diplomatic or geopolitical developments, (iii) possible fluctuations in exchange rates, differing legal systems and the existence or possible imposition of exchange controls, custodial restrictions or other non-U.S. or U.S. governmental laws or restrictions applicable to such investments, (iv) national policies that may limit the Fund's investment opportunities such as restrictions on investment in issuers or industries deemed sensitive to national interests, (v) the lack or relatively early development of legal structures governing private and foreign investments and private property, and (vi) less diverse or immature economic structures. The risks of investing in these markets may be exacerbated relative to investments in developed markets and investments in these countries may be subject to erratic and abrupt price movements. In addition, emerging markets may impose capital restrictions and thus, may adversely affect the operations of the Fund and certain emerging markets impose constraints on currency exchange and some currencies in emerging markets may have been devalued significantly against the U.S. dollar. In addition to withholding taxes on investment income, some countries in emerging markets may impose differential capital gain taxes on foreign investors. For these and other reasons, the prices of securities in emerging markets can fluctuate more significantly than the prices of securities of companies in developed markets. The less developed the country, the greater effect these risks may have on your investment in the Fund.

Emerging markets have evolved in a dynamic political and economic environment brought about by events over recent years that have reshaped political boundaries and traditional ideologies. In such a dynamic environment, there can be no assurance that these emerging markets will continue to present viable investment opportunities for the Fund. In the past, governments of countries in emerging markets have expropriated substantial amounts of private property, and most claims of the property owners have never been fully settled. There is no assurance that such expropriations will not reoccur. In such event, it is possible that the Fund could lose the entire value of its investments in the affected markets.

Some economies are less well developed and less diverse and more vulnerable to the ebb and flow of international trade, trade barriers and other protectionist or retaliatory measures. The economies of emerging market countries may be based predominately on only a few industries or may be dependent on revenues from participating commodities or on international aid or developmental assistance, may be highly vulnerable to changes in local or global trade conditions, and may suffer from extreme and volatile debt burdens or inflation rates. Many of these countries are grappling with severe inflation or recession, high levels of national debt, currency exchange problems and government instability.

Certain emerging market countries have historically experienced, and may continue to experience, high rates of inflation, high interest rates, exchange rate fluctuations, large amounts of external debt, balance of payments and trade difficulties and extreme poverty and unemployment. The issuer or governmental authority that controls the repayment of an emerging market country's debt may not be able or willing to repay the principal and/or interest when due in accordance with the terms of such debt. A debtor's willingness or ability to repay principal and interest due in a timely manner may be affected by, among other factors, its cash flow situation, and, in the case of a government debtor, the extent of its foreign reserves, the availability of sufficient foreign exchange on the date a payment is due, the relative size of the debt service burden to the economy as a whole and the political constraints to which a government debtor may be subject. Government debtors may default on their debt and may also be dependent on expected disbursements from foreign governments, multilateral agencies and others abroad to reduce principal and interest arrearages on their debt. Holders of government debt may be requested to participate in the rescheduling of such debt and to extend further loans to government debtors. If such an event occurs, the Fund may have limited legal recourse against the issuer and/or guarantor. Remedies must, in some cases, be pursued in the courts of the defaulting party itself, and the ability of the holder of foreign government fixed income securities to obtain recourse may be subject to the political climate in the relevant country. In addition, no assurance can be given that the holders of commercial bank debt will not contest payments to the holders of other foreign government debt obligations in the event of default under their commercial bank loan agreements.

The Fund may encounter substantial difficulties in obtaining and enforcing judgments against individuals and companies located in certain emerging market countries, either individually or in combination with other shareholders. It may be difficult or impossible to obtain or enforce legislation or remedies against governments, their agencies and sponsored entities. Additionally, in certain emerging market countries, fraud, corruption and attempts at market manipulation may be more prevalent than in developed market countries. Shareholder claims that are common in the U.S. and are generally viewed as determining misconduct, including class action securities law and fraud claims, generally are difficult or impossible to pursue as a matter of law or practicality in many emerging markets.



Also, there may be less publicly available information about issuers in emerging markets than would be available for issuers in more developed markets, and such issuers may not be subject to accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards and requirements comparable to those to which U.S. companies or issuers in more developed markets are subject. In certain countries with emerging markets, reporting standards vary widely. As a result, traditional investment measurements used in the U.S. may not be applicable. Emerging market investments may be substantially less liquid and more volatile than those of more developed markets, and securities may be held by a limited number of investors. This may adversely affect the timing and pricing of the Fund's acquisition or disposal of emerging market investments.

The laws in certain emerging market countries may be based upon or be highly influenced by religious codes or rules. The interpretation of how these laws apply to certain investments may change over time, which could have a negative impact on those investments and the Fund.

Practices in relation to settlement of securities transactions in emerging markets involve higher risks than those in developed markets, in part because the Fund may use brokers and counterparties that are less well capitalized, and custody and registration of assets in some countries may be unreliable.

Many emerging market countries have little experience with the corporate form of business organization and may not have well-developed corporation and business laws or concepts of fiduciary duty in the business context. The organizational structures of certain issuers in emerging markets may limit investor rights and recourse.

Regulatory authorities in some emerging markets currently do not provide the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board with the ability to inspect public accounting firms as required by U.S. law, including sufficient access to inspect audit work papers and practices, or otherwise do not cooperate with U.S. regulators, which potentially could expose investors to significant risks.

## **FIXED INCOME SECURITIES**

The fixed income securities in which the Fund may invest include securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies or instrumentalities and securities issued by domestic or foreign corporations and other entities.

**Recent Fixed Income Market Events.** The Federal Reserve and certain foreign central banks have started to lower interest rates, but it is difficult to accurately predict the pace at which interest rates might change, the timing, frequency or magnitude of any such changes in interest rates, or when such changes might stop or reverse course. Additionally, various economic and political factors, such as inflation, could cause the Federal Reserve or another foreign central bank to change their approach in the future and such actions may result in an economic slowdown in the U.S. and abroad. Unexpected changes in interest rates could lead to significant market volatility or reduce liquidity in certain sectors of the market. Deteriorating economic fundamentals may, in turn, increase the risk of default or insolvency of particular issuers, negatively impact market value, cause credit spreads to widen, and reduce bank balance sheets. Any of these could cause an increase in market volatility or reduce liquidity across various markets. Additionally, high public debt in the U.S. and other countries creates ongoing systemic and market risks and policymaking uncertainty. There is a potential for materially increased regulation in the future, as well as higher taxes or taxes restructured to incentivize different activities. These changes, should they occur, may impose added costs on the Fund and its service providers, and affect the businesses of various portfolio companies, in ways that cannot necessarily be foreseen at the present time. Markets may react strongly to expectations about the changes in these policies, which could increase volatility, especially if the markets' expectations for changes in government policies are not borne out. Policy changes by the U.S. Government, the Federal Reserve or the central banks may expose the Fund's investments in debt securities and the fixed income markets to heightened volatility and may reduce liquidity for certain Fund investments, which could cause the value of the Fund's investments and share price to decline. To the extent that the Fund experiences high redemptions because of these policy changes, the Fund may experience increased portfolio turnover, which will increase the costs that the Fund incurs and may lower the Fund's performance, and have trouble selling investments to meet shareholder redemptions.

**Ratings.** As noted above, the Fund may invest in various fixed income securities, including fixed income securities that are rated at the time of purchase as investment grade by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization ("NRSRO"), such as S&P Global Ratings ("S&P"), Moody's Investors Service, Inc. ("Moody's"), or Fitch Ratings, Inc. ("Fitch") or of equivalent quality as determined by the Adviser. Investment grade fixed income securities include:

- Securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies or instrumentalities;
- Bonds or bank obligations rated in one of the four highest categories (such as BBB- or higher by S&P);
- Short-term notes rated in one of the two highest categories (such as SP-2 or higher by S&P); and
- Commercial paper or short-term bank obligations rated in one of the three highest categories (such as A-3 or higher by S&P).

Investment grade fixed income securities are generally perceived to have a lower degree of credit risk. However, certain investment grade securities with lower ratings are considered medium quality and may be subject to greater credit risk than the highest rated securities. If a security's rating falls below that required at the time of purchase, the Adviser will consider what action, if any, should be taken consistent with the Fund's investment objective. Additional information concerning securities ratings is contained in Appendix A to this SAI.

**U.S. Government Agency Securities.** U.S. Government agency securities are issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government or its agencies or instrumentalities or government sponsored enterprises. Some obligations issued by U.S. Government agencies and instrumentalities are supported by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Treasury; others by the right of the issuer to borrow from the U.S. Treasury; others by the discretionary authority of the U.S. Government to purchase certain obligations of the agency or instrumentality; and others only by the credit of the agency or instrumentality. U.S. Government securities bear fixed, floating or variable rates of interest. While the U.S. Government may provide financial support to certain U.S. Government-sponsored agencies or instrumentalities, no assurance can be given that it will do so, since it is not so obligated by law. U.S. Government agency obligations and repurchase agreements secured thereby are primarily subject to market risk, credit risk and interest rate risk.

**U.S. Treasury Obligations.** U.S. Treasury obligations may differ in their interest rates, maturities, times of issuance and other characteristics, and include bills (initial maturities of one year or less), notes (initial maturities between two and ten years), and bonds (initial maturities over ten years) issued by the U.S. Treasury, Separately Traded Registered Interest and Principal component parts of such obligations known as STRIPS, which are traded independently, and Treasury inflation protected securities, whose principal value is periodically adjusted according to the rate of inflation. The prices of these securities (like all debt securities) change between issuance and maturity in response to fluctuating market interest rates. U.S. Treasury obligations are subject to credit risk and interest rate risk. The total amount of debt the Treasury is authorized to incur is subject to a statutory limit. Once the Treasury reaches the debt limit, Congress must raise, extend or otherwise modify the limit to enable the Treasury to incur additional debt to pay the obligations of the U.S. government, including principal and interest payments on certain U.S. Treasury obligations (such as Treasury bills, notes and bonds). The failure, or potential failure, to increase the statutory debt limit could: increase the risk that the U.S. government defaults on payments on certain U.S. Treasury obligations; cause the credit rating of the U.S. government to be downgraded or increase volatility in both stock and bond markets; result in higher debt servicing payments by the U.S. government; reduce prices of Treasury securities; and/or increase the costs of certain kinds of debt.

The Fund may invest in component parts of U.S. Treasury notes or bonds, namely either the principal of such Treasury obligations or one of the interest payments scheduled to be paid on such obligations. These obligations may take the form of: (1) Treasury obligations from which the interest coupons have been stripped; (2) the interest coupons that are stripped; (3) book-entries at a Federal Reserve member bank representing ownership of Treasury obligation components; or (4) receipts evidencing the component parts (principal or coupons) of Treasury obligations that have not actually been stripped. Such receipts evidence ownership of component parts of Treasury obligations (principal or coupons) purchased by a third party (typically an investment banking firm) and held on behalf of the third party in physical or book-entry form by a major commercial bank or trust company pursuant to a custody agreement with the third party. These custodial receipts are known by various names, including “Treasury Receipts,” “Treasury Investment Growth Receipts” (“TIGRs”) and “Certificates of Accrual on Treasury Securities” (“CATs”), and are not issued by the U.S. Treasury; therefore they are not U.S. Government securities, although the underlying bonds represented by these receipts are debt obligations of the U.S. Treasury.

**Investment Grade Fixed Income Securities.** The Fund may invest in fixed income securities of domestic or foreign issuers (corporate bonds, debentures, notes and other similar corporate debt instruments) rated as investment grade at the time of purchase by a NRSRO.

Even fixed income securities rated investment grade by a NRSRO possess some speculative characteristics. There are risks involved in applying credit ratings as a method for evaluating fixed income securities in that credit ratings evaluate the safety of principal and interest payments, not market value risk. In addition, credit ratings may not be correct and credit rating agencies may not change credit ratings on a timely basis to reflect changes in economic or company conditions that affect a security’s market value. Changes in economic conditions or other circumstances may lead to a weakened capacity of the issuer to make principal and interest payments on such securities.

The Fund will rely on the judgment, analysis and experience of the Adviser in evaluating the creditworthiness of an issuer. In this evaluation, the Adviser may take into consideration, among other things, the issuer’s financial resources and ability to cover its interest and fixed charges, factors relating to the issuer’s industry and its sensitivity to economic conditions and trends, its operating history, the quality of the issuer’s management and regulatory matters. The rate of return or return of principal on some debt obligations may be linked or indexed to the level of exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and a foreign currency or currencies.

The risk of loss due to default by the issuer is significantly greater for the holders of lower quality fixed income securities because such securities are generally unsecured and are often subordinated to other obligations of the issuer. During an economic downturn or a sustained period of rising interest rates, highly leveraged issuers of lower quality fixed income securities may experience financial stress and may not have sufficient revenues to meet their interest payment obligations. An issuer’s ability to service its debt obligations may also be adversely affected by specific corporate developments, its inability to meet specific projected business forecasts, or the unavailability of additional financing.

Factors adversely affecting the market value of fixed income securities may adversely affect the net asset value of the Fund if it invests in such securities. In addition, the Fund may incur additional expenses to the extent it is required to seek recovery upon a default in the payment of principal of or interest on its portfolio holdings.

The secondary trading market for lower-quality fixed income securities is generally not as liquid as the secondary market for higher-quality fixed income securities and is very thin for some fixed income securities. The relative lack of an active secondary market may have an adverse impact on market price and the Fund’s ability to dispose of particular issues when necessary to meet the Fund’s liquidity needs or in response to a specific economic event such as a deterioration in the creditworthiness of the issuer. The relative lack of an active secondary market for certain securities may also make it more difficult for the Fund to obtain information for purposes of valuing the Fund’s portfolio. Pricing data is generally available on many high yield issues only from a limited number of dealers and may not necessarily represent firm bids of such dealers or prices for actual sales. During such times, the ability to value the securities becomes more difficult and judgment plays a greater role in valuation because there is less reliable, objective data available.

**Variable and Floating Rate Obligations.** The interest rates payable on certain fixed income securities in which the Fund may invest are not fixed and may fluctuate based upon changes in market rates. A variable rate obligation has an interest rate which is adjusted at predesignated periods in response to changes in the market rate of interest on which the interest rate is based. Variable and floating rate obligations are generally less effective than fixed rate instruments at locking in a particular yield. Nevertheless, such obligations may fluctuate in value in response to interest rate changes if there is a delay between changes in market interest rates and the interest reset date for the obligation, or for other reasons.

The Fund may invest in floating rate debt instruments (“floaters”) and engage in credit spread trades. The interest rate on a floater is a variable rate which is tied to another interest rate, such as a money-market index or Treasury bill rate. The interest rate on a floater resets periodically, typically every six months. While, because of the interest rate reset feature, floaters provide the Fund with a certain degree of protection against rises in interest rates, the Fund will participate in any declines in interest rates as well. A credit spread trade is an investment position relating to a difference in the prices or interest rates of two securities or currencies, where the

value of the investment position is determined by movements in the difference between the prices or interest rates, as the case may be, of the respective securities or currencies.

The floating rate obligations in which the Fund invests typically have multiple reset periods during the year with each reset period applicable to a designated portion of the obligations. If the Fund does so, it will consider the shortened period to be the adjustment period of the obligations. As short-term interest rates rise, interest payable to the Fund should increase. As short-term interest rates decline, interest payable to the Fund should decrease. The amount of time that will pass before the Fund experiences the effects of changing short-term interest rates will depend on the dollar-weighted average time until the next interest rate adjustment on the Fund's portfolio of obligations.

Obligations usually have mandatory and optional prepayment provisions. Because of prepayments, the actual remaining maturity of an obligation may be considerably less than its stated maturity. If an obligation is prepaid, the Fund will have to reinvest the proceeds in other obligations or securities, which may have a lower fixed spread over its base rate. In such a case, the amount of interest paid to the Fund would likely decrease.

In the event of a change in the benchmark interest rate on an obligation, the rate payable to lenders under the obligation will, in turn, change at the next scheduled reset date. If the benchmark rate goes up, the Fund as lender would earn interest at a higher rate, but only on and after the reset date. If the benchmark rate goes down, the Fund as lender would earn interest at a lower rate, but only on and after the reset date.

Market interest rate changes may also cause the Fund's NAV to experience volatility. This is because the value of an obligation asset in the Fund is partially a function of whether it is paying what the market perceives to be a market rate of interest for the particular obligation given its individual credit and other characteristics. If market interest rates change, an obligation's value could be affected to the extent the interest rate paid on that obligation does not reset at the same time. The rates of interest paid on the obligation in which the Fund invests have a weighted average reset period that typically is less than 90 days. Therefore, the impact of the lag between a change in market interest rates and the change in the overall rate on the portfolio is expected to be minimal.

Finally, to the extent that changes in market rates of interest are reflected, not in a change to a base rate, but in a change in the spread over the base rate which is payable on obligations of the type and quality in which the Fund invests, the Fund's NAV could be adversely affected. Again, this is because the value of an obligation asset in the Fund is partially a function of whether it is paying what the market perceives to be a market rate of interest for the particular obligation given its individual credit and other characteristics. However, unlike changes in market rates of interest for which there is only a temporary lag before the portfolio reflects those changes, changes in an obligation's value based on changes in the market spread on obligations in the Fund's portfolio may be of longer duration.

**Interest Rates and Portfolio Maturity.** Interest rates on securities in which the Fund invests may adjust periodically based on a base rate plus a premium or spread over the base rate. The base rate usually is the federal funds rate, the prime rate, or other base lending rates or Reference Rates (as defined below) used by commercial lenders. The prime rate quoted by a major U.S. bank is generally the interest rate at which that bank is willing to lend U.S. dollars to its most creditworthy borrowers, although it may not be the bank's lowest available rate.

Certain variable or floating securities have coupon rates that are based on the Secured Overnight Financing Rate ("SOFR"), Euro Interbank Offered Rate and other similar types of reference rates (each, a "Reference Rate"). These Reference Rates are generally intended to represent the rate at which contributing banks may obtain short-term borrowings within certain financial markets. The elimination of a Reference Rate or any other changes or reforms to the determination or supervision of Reference Rates could have an adverse impact on the market for or value of any securities or payments linked to those Reference Rates and other financial obligations held by the Fund or on its overall financial condition or results of operations. Any substitute Reference Rate and any pricing adjustments imposed by a regulator or by counterparties or otherwise may adversely affect a Fund's performance and/or NAV. At this time, it is not possible to completely identify or predict the effect of any such changes, any establishment of alternative Reference Rates or any other reforms to Reference Rates that may be enacted in the UK or elsewhere.

**Non-Investment Grade Fixed Income Securities.** The Fund may invest up to 5% of its total assets in non-investment grade fixed income securities (commonly known as "junk bonds"). Investments in such securities are inherently speculative. The lower ratings reflect a greater possibility that adverse changes in the financial condition of the issuer or in general economic conditions, or both, or an unanticipated rise in interest rates, may impair the ability of the issuer to make payments of interest and principal. The inability (or perceived inability) of issuers to make timely payment of interest and principal would likely make the values of such securities held by the Fund more volatile and could limit the Fund's ability to sell its securities at prices approximating the values the Fund had placed on such securities. In the absence of a liquid trading market for securities held by the Fund, it may be difficult to establish a fair value of such securities. If the issuer defaults on its obligation, the value of the security would fall and the Fund's income also would decline.

Securities ratings are based largely on the issuer's historical financial condition and the rating agencies' analysis at the time of rating. Consequently, the rating assigned to any particular security is not necessarily a reflection of the issuer's current financial condition, which may be better or worse than the rating would indicate. In addition, the rating assigned to a security by an NRSRO does not reflect an assessment of the volatility of the security's market value or the liquidity of an investment in the security.

Like those of other fixed income securities, the values of non-investment grade securities generally go up and down in response to changes in interest rates. A decrease in interest rates generally will result in an increase in the value of fixed income securities. Conversely, during periods of rising interest rates, the value of the Fund's fixed income securities generally will decline. The values of non-investment grade fixed income securities often may be affected to a greater extent by changes in general economic conditions and business conditions affecting the issuers of such securities and their industries. Negative publicity or investor perceptions also may adversely affect the values of non-investment grade fixed income securities. Changes by NRSROs in their ratings of any fixed income security and changes in the ability of an issuer to make payments of interest and principal also may affect the value of these investments. Changes in the value of portfolio securities generally will not affect income derived from these securities, but will affect the Fund's net asset value.

Issuers of lower rated securities often are highly leveraged, so that their ability to service their debt obligations during an economic downturn or during sustained periods of rising interest rates may be impaired. Such issuers may not have more traditional methods of financing available to them and may be unable to repay outstanding obligations at maturity by refinancing. The risk of loss due to default in payment of interest or repayment of principal by such issuers is significantly greater because such securities frequently are unsecured and subordinated to the prior payment of senior indebtedness.

**Mortgage Pass-Through Securities.** The Fund may invest in residential and commercial mortgage pass-through securities. Mortgage pass-through securities represent interests in pools of mortgages in which payments of both principal and interest on the securities are generally made monthly, in effect “passing through” monthly payments made by borrowers in the residential or commercial mortgage loans which underlie the securities (net of any fees paid to the issuer or guarantor of the securities). Mortgage pass-through securities differ from other forms of debt securities, which normally provide for periodic payment of interest in fixed amounts with principal payments at maturity or specified call dates. Early repayment of principal on mortgage pass-through securities (arising from prepayments of principal due to the sale of underlying property, refinancing, or foreclosure, net of fees and costs which may be incurred) may expose the Fund to a lower rate of return upon reinvestment of principal. Also, if a security subject to repayment has been purchased at a premium, in the event of prepayment, the value of the premium would be lost.

There are generally three types of mortgage pass-through securities: (1) those issued by the U.S. Government, one of its agencies or instrumentalities or a government sponsored enterprise, such as Government National Mortgage Association (“GNMA”), Fannie Mae (“FNMA”), and Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (“FHLMC”); (2) those issued by private issuers that represent an interest in or are collateralized by pass-through securities issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government or one of its agencies or instrumentalities; and (3) those issued by private issuers that represent an interest in or are collateralized by whole mortgage loans or pass-through securities without a government guarantee but may have some form of private credit enhancement.

GNMA is authorized to guarantee, with the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government, the timely payment of principal and interest on securities issued by institutions approved by GNMA (such as savings and loan institutions, commercial banks and mortgage banks), and backed by pools of FHA-insured or VA-guaranteed mortgages. Obligations of FNMA and FHLMC are not backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government. In the case of obligations not backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government, the Fund must look principally to the agency issuing or guaranteeing the obligation for ultimate repayment. FNMA and FHLMC may attempt to borrow from the U.S. Treasury to meet their obligations, but the U.S. Treasury is under no obligation to lend to FNMA or FHLMC.

The FHFA and the U.S. Treasury have imposed strict limits on the size of FNMA and FHLMC’s mortgage portfolios. Discussions among policymakers continue, however, as to whether FNMA and FHLMC should be nationalized, privatized, restructured, or eliminated altogether. FNMA and FHLMC also are the subject of several continuing legal actions and investigations over certain accounting, disclosure or corporate governance matters, which (along with any resulting financial restatements) may continue to have an adverse effect on the guaranteeing entities. Importantly, the future of FNMA and FHLMC remains in question as the U.S. Government considers multiple options.

Under the direction of the FHFA, FNMA and FHLMC jointly developed a common securitization platform for the issuance of a uniform mortgage-backed security (“UMBS”) (the “Single Security Initiative”) that aligns the characteristics of FNMA and FHLMC certificates. In June 2019, under the Single Security Initiative, FNMA and FHLMC started issuing UMBS in place of their prior offerings of to-be-announced mortgage-backed securities (“TBA”). The Single Security Initiative seeks to support the overall liquidity of the TBA market by aligning the characteristics of FNMA and FHLMC certificates. The effects that the Single Security Initiative may have on the market for TBA and other mortgage-backed securities are uncertain.

Private mortgage pass-through securities are structured similarly to GNMA, FNMA, and FHLMC mortgage pass-through securities and are issued by originators of and investors in mortgage loans, including depository institutions, mortgage banks, investment banks and special purpose subsidiaries of the foregoing.

Pools created by private mortgage pass-through issuers generally offer a higher rate of interest than government and government-related pools to compensate for the fact that there are no direct or indirect government or agency guarantees of payments in the private pools. The timely payment of interest and principal on mortgage loans in these pools may be supported by various other forms of insurance or guarantees, including individual loan, pool and hazard insurance, subordination and letters of credit. Such insurance and guarantees may be issued by private insurers, banks and mortgage poolers. There is no assurance that private guarantors or insurers, if any, will meet their obligations. Timely payment of interest and principal of these pools also may be partially supported by various enhancements such as over-collateralization and senior/subordination structures and by various forms of insurance or insured by governmental entities, private insurers and the mortgage poolers. Some mortgage pass-through securities issued by private organizations may not be readily marketable, may be more difficult to value accurately and may be more volatile than similar securities issued by a government entity.

## **WHEN-ISSUED SECURITIES**

The Fund may purchase securities on a “when-issued” basis. In buying “when-issued” securities, the Fund commits to buy securities at a certain price even though the securities may not be delivered for up to 120 days. No payment or delivery is made by the Fund in a “when-issued” transaction until the Fund receives payment or delivery from the other party to the transaction. Although the Fund receives no income from the above-described securities prior to delivery, the market value of such securities is still subject to change. As a consequence, it is possible that the market price of the securities at the time of delivery may be higher or lower than the purchase price.

When the Fund purchases securities on a when-issued basis, it will maintain with its custodian cash or liquid securities having an aggregate value equal to the amount of its purchase commitment until payment is made. The purpose and effect of such maintenance is to prevent the Fund from gaining investment leverage from when-issued transactions. When-issued securities may decline or increase in value during the period from the Fund’s investment commitment to the settlement of the purchase.

## INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERINGS

The Fund may invest in initial public offerings (“IPOs”). By definition, IPOs have not traded publicly until the time of their offerings. Special risks associated with IPOs may include a limited number of shares available for trading, unseasoned trading, lack of investor knowledge of the company, and limited operating history, all of which may contribute to price volatility. Many IPOs are issued by undercapitalized companies of small or microcap size. Some of the companies involved in new industries may be regarded as developmental state companies, without revenues or operating income, or the near-term prospects of them. Investments in IPOs may have a magnified performance impact relative to other investments.

Pursuant to the Adviser’s allocation policies and procedures, the Fund generally will be eligible to participate on a rotating basis in any applicable IPOs that may come available to eligible clients of the Adviser.

## ILLIQUID INVESTMENTS, RESTRICTED SECURITIES AND PRIVATE PLACEMENT OFFERINGS

**Illiquid Investments.** The SEC’s liquidity risk management rule, Rule 22e-4 (the “Liquidity Rule”), defines the term “illiquid investments” to mean any investments that the Fund reasonably expects cannot be sold or disposed of in current market conditions in seven calendar days or less in the ordinary course of business without the sale or disposition significantly changing the market value of the investment. Under the supervision of the Board of Trustees, the Adviser determines the liquidity of the Fund’s investments and, through reports from the Adviser and the Fund’s administrator, the Board monitors investments in illiquid investments. Illiquid investments may include securities and other financial instruments that do not have a readily available market, repurchase agreements which have a maturity of longer than seven calendar days, restricted securities, other than certain foreign securities, restricted securities pursuant to Rule 144A under the Securities Act and commercial paper sold in reliance on Section 4(2) of the Securities Act, unless, based upon a review of the relevant market, trading and investment-specific considerations, those investments are determined not to be illiquid. The absence of a trading market can make it difficult to ascertain a market value for illiquid investments. When no market quotations are available, illiquid investments are priced at fair value as determined in good faith by the Adviser using guidelines approved by the Board of Trustees. The Fund may not acquire any illiquid investment if, immediately after the acquisition, the Fund would have invested more than 15% of its net assets in illiquid investments. If through a change in values, net assets, or other circumstances, the Fund was in a position where more than 15% of its net assets were invested in illiquid investments, the Fund would take appropriate steps to protect liquidity. If the limitation on illiquid investments is exceeded, other than by a change in market values, the condition will be reported to the Board of Trustees and, when required by the Liquidity Rule, to the SEC. Disposing of these investments may involve time-consuming negotiation and legal expenses, and it may be difficult or impossible for the Fund to sell them promptly at an acceptable price and may have to dispose of such investments over extended periods of time.

**Restricted Securities.** Restricted securities can generally be sold in privately negotiated transactions, pursuant to an exemption from registration under the Securities Act or in a registered public offering. Where registration is required, the Fund may be obligated to pay all or part of the registration expense and a considerable period may elapse between the time the Fund decides to seek registration and the time the Fund may be permitted to sell a security under an effective registration statement. If, during such a period, adverse market conditions were to develop, the Fund might obtain a less favorable price than prevailed at the time it decided to seek registration of the security.

**Private Placement Offerings.** The Fund may invest in private placement offerings. Investments in private placement offerings are made in reliance on the “private placement” exemption from registration afforded by Section 4(2) or Regulation D of the Securities Act (“Section 4(2) securities”). Section 4(2) securities are restricted as to disposition under the federal securities law and generally are sold to institutional investors such as the Fund that agree they are purchasing the securities for investment and not with an intention to distribute to the public.

## OTHER INVESTMENT COMPANIES

The Fund may invest in shares of other investment companies, including open-end funds, closed-end funds, business development companies, exchange-traded funds (“ETFs”), exchange-traded notes (“ETNs”), and interests in unit investment trusts. Investments in the securities of other investment companies may involve duplication of advisory fees and certain other expenses. By investing in another investment company, the Fund becomes a shareholder of that investment company. As a result, Fund shareholders indirectly will bear the Fund’s proportionate share of the fees and expenses paid by shareholders of the other investment company, in addition to the fees and expenses Fund shareholders directly bear in connection with the Fund’s own operations, and are indirectly exposed to the risks of the investments held by the other investment company. These other fees and expenses would be reflected as Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses and would be included in the Fees and Expenses Table in the Prospectus, if applicable. Investment in other investment companies may involve the payment of substantial premiums above the value of such issuer’s portfolio securities or the Fund may have to sell such investments at a discount to the issuer’s portfolio securities. Exchange-traded and closed-end funds may trade at premiums or discounts to their net asset values and be subject to trading halts.

Although a money market fund is designed to be a relatively low risk investment, it is not free of risk. Despite the short maturities and high credit quality of a money market fund’s investments, increases in interest rates and deteriorations in the credit quality of the instruments the money market fund has purchased may reduce the money market fund’s yield and can cause the price of a money market security to decrease. In addition, a money market fund is subject to the risk that the value of an investment may be eroded over time by inflation.

ETFs trade like a common stock and passive ETFs usually represent a fixed portfolio of securities designed to track the performance and dividend yield of a particular domestic or foreign market index. If the Fund invests in ETFs, the Fund would typically purchase passive ETF shares to obtain exposure to all or a portion of the stock or bond market. As a shareholder of an ETF, the Fund would be subject to its ratable share of the ETF’s expenses, including its advisory and administration expenses.

An investment in an ETF generally presents the same primary risks as an investment in a conventional mutual fund (i.e., one that is not exchange-traded) that has the same investment objective, strategies, and policies. The price of an ETF can fluctuate within a wide range, and the Fund could lose money investing in an ETF if the prices of the securities owned by the ETF go down. In addition, ETFs are subject to the following risks that do not apply to conventional funds: (1) the market price of the ETF’s shares may trade at a discount or premium to their NAV; (2) an active trading market for an ETF’s shares may not develop or be maintained; or (3) trading

of an ETF's shares may be halted if the listing exchange's officials deem such action appropriate, the shares are de-listed from the exchange, or the activation of market-wide "circuit breakers" (which are tied to large decreases in stock prices) halts stock trading generally. The Fund may also invest in ETNs, which are structured debt securities. Whereas ETFs' liabilities are secured by their portfolio securities, ETNs' liabilities are unsecured general obligations of the issuer. ETFs and ETNs have expenses associated with their operation, typically including, with respect to ETFs, advisory fees.

The Fund's investment in securities of other investment companies is generally limited to (i) 3% of the total voting stock of any one investment company, (ii) 5% of the Fund's total assets with respect to any one investment company and (iii) 10% of the Fund's total assets in all investment companies in the aggregate. However, the Fund may exceed these limits when investing in shares of an ETF or other investment company, subject to the terms and conditions of an exemptive order from the SEC obtained by the ETF or other investment company that permits an investing fund, such as the Fund, to invest in the ETF or other investment company in excess of the limits described above. The Fund may also exceed these limits when investing in shares of money market funds to the extent permitted by the 1940 Act and applicable rules and regulations adopted by the SEC thereunder.

Additionally, Rule 12d1-4 under the 1940 Act permits certain types of fund of fund arrangements without an exemptive order, subject to certain conditions, including limits on control and voting of acquired funds' shares, evaluations and findings by investment advisers, fund investment agreements, and limits on most three-tier fund structures.

## **SECURITIES LENDING**

The Fund may lend securities to qualified brokers, dealers, banks and other financial institutions. Securities lending would allow the Fund to retain ownership of the securities loaned and, at the same time, to earn additional income. Since there may be delays in the recovery of loaned securities, or even a loss of rights in collateral supplied should the borrower fail financially, loans would be made only to parties deemed by the Adviser to be of good standing. In addition, they would only be made if, in the Adviser's judgment, the consideration to be earned from such loans would justify the risk. Such loans would not be made if, as a result, the aggregate of all outstanding loans of the Fund exceed one-third of the value of its total assets (including the value of all assets received as collateral for the loan). The Fund does not currently engage in securities lending activities.

## **TEMPORARY INVESTMENTS**

The temporary investments that the Fund may make include:

(1) Cash, time deposits, certificates of deposit (including marketable variable rate certificates of deposit) and bankers' acceptances issued by a commercial bank or savings and loan association. Time deposits are non-negotiable deposits maintained in a banking institution for a specified period of time at a stated interest rate. Time deposits maturing in more than seven days will not be purchased by the Fund. Certificates of deposit are negotiable short-term obligations issued by commercial banks or savings and loan associations against funds deposited in the issuing institution. Variable rate certificates of deposit are certificates of deposit on which the interest rate is periodically adjusted prior to their stated maturity based upon a specified market rate. A bankers' acceptance is a time draft drawn on a commercial bank by a borrower usually in connection with an international commercial transaction (to finance the import, export, transfer or storage of goods).

The Fund may invest in obligations of U.S. banks, foreign branches of U.S. banks (Eurodollars), and U.S. branches of foreign banks (Yankee dollars). Euro and Yankee dollar investments will involve the same risks of investing in foreign securities discussed previously. Although the Adviser carefully considers these factors when making investments, the Fund does not limit the amount of its assets that can be invested in any one type of instrument or in any foreign country in which a branch of a U.S. bank or the parent of a U.S. branch is located.

The Fund will not invest in any security issued by a commercial bank unless (i) the bank has total assets of at least \$1 billion, or the equivalent in other currencies, or, in the case of a domestic bank that does not have total assets of at least \$1 billion, the aggregate investment made in any one such bank is limited to \$250,000 and the principal amount of such investment is insured in full by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and (ii) in the case of a U.S. bank, it is a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

(2) Commercial paper that at the time of purchase is rated in the highest rating category by a NRSRO or, if not rated, issued by a corporation having an outstanding unsecured debt issue that meets such rating requirement at time of purchase;

(3) Short-term corporate obligations rated in the highest rating category by a NRSRO at time of purchase;

(4) U.S. Government obligations, including bills, notes, bonds and other debt securities issued by the U.S. Treasury. These are direct obligations of the U.S. Government and differ mainly in interest rates, maturities and dates of issue;

(5) U.S. Government agency securities issued or guaranteed by U.S. Government sponsored instrumentalities and federal agencies. These include securities issued by the Federal Home Loan Banks, Federal Land Bank, Farmers Home Administration, Farm Credit Banks, Federal Intermediate Credit Bank, Fannie Mae, Federal Financing Bank, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and others; and

(6) Repurchase agreements.

## **REGULATORY AND RECENT MARKET EVENTS**

Policy changes by the U.S. government, the U.S. Federal Reserve and/or foreign governments, and political and economic changes within the U.S. and abroad, such as inflation, changes in interest rates, recessions, changes in the U.S. presidential administration and Congress, the U.S. government's inability at times to agree on a long-term budget and deficit reduction plan, the threat or occurrence of a federal government shutdown or the occurrence of a failure to increase the federal government's debt limit, which could result in a default on the government's obligations, may affect investor and consumer confidence and may adversely

impact financial markets and the broader economy, perhaps suddenly and to a significant degree. The severity or duration of adverse economic conditions may also be affected by policy changes made by governments or quasi-governmental organizations. Global economies and financial markets are becoming increasingly interconnected, which increases the possibility of many markets being affected by events in a single country or events affecting a single or small number of issuers.

Both U.S. and international markets have experienced significant volatility in recent years. As a result of such volatility, investment returns may fluctuate significantly, and the risks discussed herein associated with an investment in the Fund may be increased. Deteriorating economic fundamentals may increase the risk of default or insolvency of particular issuers, negatively impact market value, increase market volatility, cause credit spreads to widen, reduce bank balance sheets and cause unexpected changes in interest rates. Any of these could cause an increase in market volatility, reduce liquidity across various sectors or markets or decrease confidence in the markets.

Some countries, including the U.S., have adopted more protectionist trade policies, including trade tariffs and other trade barriers, which is a trend that appears to be continuing globally. The current political environment has intensified concerns about a global trade war. Slowing global economic growth, the rise in protectionist trade policies, inflationary pressures, changes to some major international trade and security agreements, risks associated with trade and security agreements between countries and regions, including the U.S. and other foreign nations, political or economic dysfunction within some countries or regions, including the U.S., and dramatic changes in consumer sentiment, commodity prices and currency values could affect the economies and markets of many nations, including the U.S., in ways that cannot necessarily be foreseen at the present time and may create significant market volatility. In addition, these policies, including the impact on the U.S. dollar, may decrease foreign demand for U.S. assets, which could have a negative impact on certain issuers and/or industries. Historical patterns of correlation among asset classes may break down in unanticipated ways during times of high volatility, disrupting investment programs and potentially causing losses.

The United States has imposed or threatened to impose tariffs and other trade barriers on imports of certain categories of goods from Canada, Mexico, and European countries. The United States also has imposed or threatened to impose tariffs and other trade barriers on imports of certain categories of goods from China, has restricted sales of certain categories of goods to China, and has established barriers to investments in China. These countries have imposed or threatened to impose retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods. If relations between the United States and these and other foreign countries do not improve or continue to deteriorate, markets and individual securities may be severely affected both regionally and globally, and the value of the Fund's investments may go down.

The Federal Reserve and certain foreign central banks have started to lower interest rates, though economic or other factors, such as inflation, could reverse or stop such changes. It is difficult to accurately predict the pace at which interest rates might change, the timing, frequency or magnitude of any such changes in interest rates, or when such changes might stop or again reverse course. Unexpected changes in interest rates could lead to significant market volatility or reduce liquidity in certain sectors of the market. Over the longer term, rising interest rates may present a greater risk than has historically been the case due to the prior period of relatively low rates and the effect of government fiscal and monetary policy initiatives and potential market reaction to those initiatives, or their alteration or cessation. It is difficult to predict the impact on various markets of significant rate changes or other significant policy changes.

Markets and market participants are increasingly reliant upon both publicly available and proprietary information data systems. Data imprecision, software or other technology malfunctions, programming inaccuracies, unauthorized use or access, the execution of ransomware and other cyberattacks, and similar circumstances may impair the performance of these systems and may have an adverse impact upon a single issuer, a group of issuers, or the market at large. In certain cases, an exchange or market may close or issue trading halts on either specific securities or even the entire market, which may result in the Fund being, among other things, unable to buy or sell certain securities or financial instruments or accurately price its investments. These fluctuations in securities prices could be a sustained trend or a drastic movement. The financial markets generally move in cycles, with periods of rising prices followed by periods of declining prices. The value of your investment may reflect these fluctuations.

Tensions, war or open conflict between nations, such as among the United States, Israel and Iran, between Russia and Ukraine, otherwise in the Middle East or in eastern Asia could affect the economies of many nations, including the United States and may contribute to increased volatility and uncertainty in the financial markets. The extent and duration of ongoing hostilities and any sanctions and related events, including the potential for cyber warfare, remain uncertain and cannot be predicted. Those events have presented and could continue to present material uncertainty and risk with respect to markets globally, including in the oil and gas markets and potentially other industries and sectors, and the performance of the Fund and its investments or operations could be negatively impacted whether or not the Fund invests in securities of issuers located in or with significant exposure to the countries or regions directly affected. For example, the armed conflict among the United States, Israel and Iran that commenced in February 2026 has contributed to increased volatility and uncertainty in financial markets as well as significant volatility in the oil and natural gas markets, which has created widespread economic disruption.

Regulators in the U.S. have adopted a number of changes to regulations involving the markets and issuers, some of which apply to the Fund. The full effect of such regulations is not currently known and certain changes, which may be revised or rescinded, could limit the Fund's ability to pursue its investment strategies or make certain investments, may make it more costly for the Fund to operate, or adversely impact its performance. Further, advancements in technology may also adversely impact market movements and liquidity and may affect the overall performance of the Fund. For example, the advanced development and increased regulation of artificial intelligence may adversely impact market movements and liquidity. As artificial intelligence is used more widely, which can occur rapidly, the profitability and growth of certain issuers may be negatively impacted in ways that cannot be foreseen and could adversely affect the Fund's performance.

High public debt in the U.S. and other countries creates ongoing systemic and market risks and policymaking uncertainty. There is no assurance that the U.S. Congress will act to raise the nation's debt ceiling; a failure to do so could cause market turmoil and substantial investment risks that cannot now be fully predicted. Unexpected political, regulatory and diplomatic events within the U.S. and abroad may affect investor and consumer confidence and may adversely impact financial markets and the broader economy.

Certain illnesses spread rapidly and have the potential to significantly and adversely affect the global economy. The impact of epidemics and/or pandemics that may arise in the future could negatively affect the economies of many nations, individual companies

and the global securities and commodities markets, including their liquidity, in ways that cannot necessarily be foreseen at the present time and could last for an extended period of time. China's economy, which has been sustained through debt-financed spending on housing and infrastructure, appears to be experiencing a significant slowdown and growing at a lower rate than prior years. Due to the size of China's economy, such a slowdown could impact financial markets and the broader economy.

Global climate change can have potential effects on property and security values. Certain issuers, industries and regions may be adversely affected by the impact of climate change in ways that cannot be foreseen. The impact of legislation, regulation and international accords related to climate change, including any direct or indirect consequences, may negatively impact certain issuers, industries and regions. A rise in sea levels, a change in weather patterns, including an increase in powerful storms and large wildfires, and/or a climate-driven increase in flooding could cause properties to lose value or become unmarketable altogether. Unlike previous declines in the real estate market, properties in affected zones may not ever recover their value. Regulatory changes and divestment movements tied to concerns about climate change could adversely affect the value of certain land and the viability of industries whose activities or products are seen as accelerating climate change.

## **CYBERSECURITY**

With the increased use of technologies such as the internet and the dependence on computer systems to perform necessary business functions, the Fund and its service providers and third-party fund distribution platforms may have become more susceptible to operational, information security and related risks resulting from cybersecurity incidents, including cyberattacks. A cybersecurity incident may refer to intentional or unintentional events that allow an unauthorized party to gain access to Fund assets, shareholder data, or proprietary information, or cause the Fund or Fund service providers (including, but not limited to, the Adviser, distributor, fund accountants, custodian, transfer agent, sub-advisers (if applicable), and financial intermediaries), as well as securities trading venues and their service providers, to suffer data corruption, lose operational functionality, or be the target of ransomware. A cybersecurity incident could, among other things, result in the loss or theft of shareholder data or funds, impact the Fund's ability to calculate NAV per share, cause the release of private shareholder information or confidential business information, result in violations of applicable privacy and other laws, impede trading, subject the Fund to regulatory fines or financial losses and/or cause reputational damage. A cyber attack may also result in shareholders or service providers being unable to access electronic systems (also known as "denial of services"), loss or theft of proprietary information or corporate data, physical damage to a computer or network system, or remediation costs associated with system repairs. The Fund may also incur additional compliance costs for corrective measures or cybersecurity risk management purposes, and such costs may be ongoing because threats of cyber-attacks are constantly evolving as cyber-attackers become more sophisticated and their techniques become more complex. Similar types of cybersecurity risks are also present for issuers or securities in which the Fund may invest, which could result in material adverse consequences for such issuers and may cause the Fund's investment in such companies to lose value. Furthermore, as a result of cyber-attacks, disruptions or failures, an exchange or market may close or issue trading halts on specific securities or the entire market, which may result in the Fund being, among other things, unable to buy or sell certain securities or unable to accurately price its investments. The Fund's service providers also may be negatively impacted due to operational risks arising from non-cybersecurity related factors such as processing errors and human errors, inadequate or failed internal or external processes, failures in systems and technology errors or malfunctions, changes in personnel, and errors caused by Fund service providers or counterparties.

In addition, other events or circumstances — whether foreseeable, unforeseeable, or beyond the Fund's control, such as acts of war, other conflicts, terrorism, natural disaster, widespread disease, pandemic or other public health crises may result in, among other things, quarantines and travel restrictions, workforce displacement and loss or reduction in personnel and other resources. In the above circumstances, the Fund and the Fund's service providers' operations may be significantly impacted, or even temporarily halted. The Fund's securities market counterparties or vendors may face the same or similar systems failure, cybersecurity breaches and other business disruptions risks.

Any of these results could have a substantial adverse impact on the Fund and its shareholders. For example, if a cybersecurity incident results in a denial of service, Fund shareholders could lose access to their electronic accounts and be unable to buy or sell Fund shares for an unknown period of time, and service providers could be unable to access electronic systems to perform critical duties for the Fund, such as trading, NAV calculation, shareholder accounting or fulfillment of Fund share purchases and redemptions. Cybersecurity incidents could cause the Fund or Fund service provider to incur regulatory penalties or scrutiny, reputational damage, additional compliance costs associated with corrective measures, or financial loss of a significant magnitude and could result in allegations that the Fund or Fund service provider violated privacy and other laws. Similar adverse consequences could result from cybersecurity incidents affecting issuers of securities in which the Fund invests, counterparties with which the Fund engages in transactions, governmental and other regulatory authorities, exchange and other financial market operators, banks, brokers, dealers, insurance companies, and other financial institutions and other parties. Furthermore, as a result of cyberattacks, disruptions or failures, an exchange or market may close or issue trading halts on specific securities or the entire market, which may result in the Fund being, among other things, unable to buy or sell certain securities or unable to accurately price its investments. Risk management systems and business continuity plans seek to reduce the risks associated with cybersecurity in the event there is a cybersecurity breach, but there are inherent limitations in these systems and plans, including the possibility that certain risks may not have been adequately identified or prepared for, in large part because different or unknown threats may emerge in the future. Furthermore, the Fund does not control the cybersecurity systems and plans of the issuers of securities in which the Fund invests or the Fund's third party service providers or trading counterparties or any other service providers whose operations may affect the Fund or its shareholders. The widespread use of work from home arrangements, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, may increase operational and information security risks. Most issuers in which the Fund invests are heavily dependent on computers and other technological platforms and resources for data storage and operations, which require ready access to the internet to conduct their business. Thus, cybersecurity incidents could also affect issuers of securities in which the Fund invests, leading to significant loss of value in the securities of issuers impacted by any such cybersecurity incidents.

The use of cloud-based service providers could heighten or change these risks. In addition, remote and hybrid arrangements by the Fund, the Adviser or their service providers could increase all of the above risks, create additional data and information accessibility concerns, and make the Fund, the Adviser or their service providers susceptible to operational disruptions, any of which could adversely impact their operations.



The Fund and its service providers, including the Adviser, may utilize artificial intelligence (“AI”) technologies, including machine learning models and generative AI, to improve operational efficiency and in connection with research. In addition, counterparties used by the Fund may utilize AI in their business activities. While the Adviser may restrict certain uses of AI tools, the Fund and the Adviser are not in a position to control the use of AI in third-party products or services. The use of AI introduces numerous potential challenges and the use of AI can lead to reputational damage, legal liabilities, and competitive disadvantages, as well as negatively impact business operations, which may occur with or without mismanagement in the use of the AI. AI requires the collection and processing of substantial amounts of data, which poses risks of data inaccuracies, incompleteness, and inherent biases, and which can degrade the technology’s effectiveness and reliability. Such data can include proprietary information, the use of which by AI may be unauthorized and subject to potential liability. Rapid technological advancements further complicate risk predictions, and competitors who adopt AI more swiftly may gain a competitive edge. The complexity and opacity of AI systems raise significant accountability and ethical concerns. AI has enhanced the ability of threat actors to amplify the potency, scale, and speed of cybersecurity attacks. AI’s role in increasing automation raises concerns about job displacement and may lead to economic and social disruptions. The unpredictable nature of AI’s impact on market dynamics complicates traditional risk assessment models, making it challenging to identify risks and opportunities using historical data. Legal and regulatory frameworks governing AI’s use, particularly concerning data privacy and protection, are evolving rapidly. These changes could materially alter how AI is used, which may negatively impact the Fund.

## TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS OF THE LKCM FUNDS

### The Board of Trustees

The Trust is governed by its Board of Trustees. The Board is responsible for and oversees the overall management and operations of the Trust and the Fund, which includes the general oversight and review of the Fund’s investment activities, in accordance with federal law and the law of the State of Delaware, as well as the stated policies of the Fund. The Board oversees the Trust’s officers and service providers, including the Adviser, which is responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of the Fund based on policies and agreements reviewed and approved by the Board. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Board regularly interacts with and receives reports from senior personnel of service providers, including the Adviser’s personnel and the Trust’s Chief Compliance Officer (“CCO”). The Board also is assisted by the Trust’s independent registered public accounting firm (who reports directly to the Trust’s Audit and Compliance Committee), independent counsel and other experts as appropriate, all of whom are selected by the Board. The Board met four times during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025.

#### *Risk Oversight*

Consistent with its responsibility for oversight of the Trust and the Fund, the Board oversees the management of risks relating to the administration and operation of the Trust and the Fund. The Adviser, as part of its responsibilities for the day-to-day operations of the Fund, is responsible for day-to-day risk management for the Fund. The Board, in the exercise of its reasonable business judgment, also separately considers potential risks that may impact the Fund. The Board performs this risk management oversight directly and, as to certain matters, through its committees and through the Independent Trustees. The following provides an overview of the principal, but not all, aspects of the Board’s oversight of risk management for the Trust and the Fund.

In general, the Fund’s risks include, among others, investment risk, credit risk, liquidity risk, valuation risk and operational risk. The Board has adopted, and periodically reviews, policies and procedures designed to address risks to the Trust and the Fund. In addition, under the general oversight of the Board, the Adviser and other service providers to the Fund has adopted a variety of policies, procedures and controls designed to address particular risks to the Fund. Different processes, procedures and controls are employed with respect to different types of risks.

The Board also oversees risk management for the Trust and the Fund through review of regular reports, presentations and other information from officers of the Trust and other persons. The Fund’s CCO and senior officers of the Adviser regularly report to the Board on a range of matters, including those relating to risk management. The Board also regularly receives reports from the Adviser with respect to the Fund’s investments. In addition to regular reports from the Adviser, the Board also receives reports regarding other service providers to the Trust, either directly or through the Adviser or the Fund’s CCO, on a periodic or regular basis. At least annually, the Board receives a report from the Fund’s CCO regarding the effectiveness of the Fund’s compliance program. Also, on an annual basis, the Board receives reports, presentations and other information from the Adviser in connection with the Board’s consideration of the renewal of the Trust’s advisory agreement with the Adviser and the Trust’s distribution plans under Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act.

The CCO also reports regularly to the Board on Fund valuation matters. In addition, the Audit and Compliance Committee receives regular reports from the Trust’s independent registered public accounting firm on internal control and financial reporting matters. On at least a quarterly basis, the Independent Trustees meet with the Fund’s CCO to discuss matters relating to the Fund’s compliance program.

#### *Board Structure and Related Matters*

Board members who are not “interested persons” of the Fund as defined in Section 2(a)(19) of the 1940 Act (“Independent Trustees”) constitute a majority of the Board. Larry J. Lockwood, an Independent Trustee, serves as Chairman of the Board. As Chairman, Mr. Lockwood’s responsibilities include: setting an agenda for each meeting of the Board; presiding at all meetings of the Board and Independent Trustees; and serving as a liaison with other Trustees, the Trust’s officers and other management personnel, and counsel to the Fund. As Chairman, Mr. Lockwood also performs such other duties as the Board may from time to time determine.

The Trustees discharge their responsibilities collectively as a Board, as well as through Board committees, each of which operates pursuant to a charter approved by the Board that delineates the specific responsibilities of that committee. The Board has established three standing committees: the Audit and Compliance Committee, the Nominating Committee and the Qualified Legal Compliance Committee. The members and responsibilities of each Board committee are summarized below.

The Board periodically evaluates its structure and composition as well as various aspects of its operations. The Board believes that its leadership structure, including its independent Chairman and Board committees, is appropriate for the Trust in light of, among other factors, the asset size and nature of the Fund, the number of Funds overseen by the Board, the arrangements for the conduct of the Fund's operations, the number of Trustees, and the Board's responsibilities. On an annual basis, the Board conducts a self-evaluation that considers, among other matters, whether the Board and its committees are functioning effectively and whether, given the size and composition of the Board and each of its committees, the Trustees are able to oversee effectively the number of Funds in the complex.

The Board holds four regularly scheduled meetings each year. The Board may hold special meetings, as needed, either in person or by telephone, to address matters arising between regular meetings. During a portion of each regular meeting, the Independent Trustees meet outside of management's presence. The Independent Trustees may hold special meetings, as needed, either in person or by telephone.

The Trustees of the Trust are identified in the tables below, which provide information as to their year of birth and positions with the Trust, term of office with the Trust and length of time served, their principal occupations for the past five years and other directorships held in public companies during the past five years.

### Independent Trustees

Name, Address and Age	Position(s) Held with the Trust	Term of Office and Length of Time Served <sup>(1)</sup>	Principal Occupation During Past Five Years	Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee	Other Directorships Held by Trustee During the Past Five Years
Richard J. Howell 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1942	Trustee  Chairman of the Audit and Compliance Committee	Since 2005  Since 2008	CPA; Adjunct Faculty at SMU Cox School of Business from 2004 to 2009; Consulting Services, since 2002; Audit Partner, Arthur Andersen LLP from 1974 to 2002.	7	None
Larry J. Lockwood 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1953	Chairman of the Board of Trustees  Trustee	Since 2021  Since 2013	C. R. Williams Professor of Finance, Stan Block Endowed Chair in Finance, Department of Finance, Neeley School of Business, Texas Christian University since 1994.	7	None
Steven R. Purvis 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1964	Trustee	Since 2013	Principal, Luther King Capital Management Corporation from 2004 to 2021, Vice President and Portfolio Manager, Luther King Capital Management Corporation from 1996 to 2021.	7	AZZ Incorporated
Mauricio Rodriguez 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1966	Trustee	Since 2021	Chair, Department of Finance, Neeley School of Business; Texas Christian University since 2002.	7	None

### Interested Trustee

J. Luther King, Jr. <sup>(2)</sup> 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1940	Trustee, President and Chief Executive Officer	Since 1994	Chairman, President and Director, Luther King Capital Management Corporation since 1979.	7	TXO Partners, L.P.
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<sup>(1)</sup> Each Trustee holds office during the lifetime of the Trust until that individual resigns, retires or is otherwise removed or replaced.

<sup>(2)</sup> Mr. King is considered to be an "interested person" of the Trust (as defined in the 1940 Act) because of his affiliation with the Adviser.

In addition to the information set forth in the tables above and other relevant qualifications, experience, attributes or skills applicable to a particular Trustee, the following provides further information about the qualifications and experience of each Trustee.

*Richard J. Howell:* Mr. Howell has extensive audit and business experience as a certified public accountant, service as a partner in a global accounting firm, service as a faculty member at a private university's business school, service as a director of a publicly held corporation and multiple years of service as a Trustee.

*J. Luther King, Jr.:* Mr. King has extensive experience in the investment management industry as chairman, president and director of an investment management firm, service on the board of numerous public and private corporations and foundations, and multiple years of service as a Trustee.

*Larry J. Lockwood:* Mr. Lockwood has extensive experience in finance as professor of finance at the business school of a private university and service as a chartered financial analyst, business consultant and lecturer, and multiple years of service as a Trustee.

*Steven R. Purvis:* Mr. Purvis has extensive experience as principal of an investment management firm and service as a portfolio manager, director of research and senior analyst, and multiple years of service as a Trustee.

*Mauricio Rodriguez:* Mr. Rodriguez has extensive experience in finance as professor of finance at the business school of a private university and service as a business consultant, expert witness in securities and commercial litigation, and lecturer, and multiple years of service as a Trustee.

The table below sets forth the compensation paid by the Trust to each Trustee of the Trust during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025:

**COMPENSATION TABLE**

Name of Trustee	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund	Pension or Retirement Benefits Accrued As Part of Fund Expenses	Estimated Annual Benefits Upon Retirement	Total Compensation from all Funds in the Trust Complex <sup>(1)</sup>
<u>Interested Trustees</u>				
J. Luther King, Jr. ....	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<u>Independent Trustees</u>				
Richard J. Howell	\$3,754	\$0	\$0	\$84,000
Larry J. Lockwood .....	\$4,023	\$0	\$0	\$90,000
Steven R. Purvis .....	\$3,397	\$0	\$0	\$76,000
Mauricio Rodriguez.....	\$3,397	\$0	\$0	\$76,000

<sup>(1)</sup> There are currently seven series comprising the Trust, six of which are offered in a separate prospectus and SAI.

The Independent Trustees receive an annual retainer of \$54,000, with the Chairman of the Board receiving an additional \$14,000 retainer and the Chairman of the Audit and Compliance Committee receiving an additional \$8,000 retainer. Each Independent Trustee also receives a meeting fee of \$4,500 for each Board meeting attended in person and a meeting fee of \$2,000 for each telephonic meeting, and is reimbursed for their reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred in attending Board meetings. For this purpose, the Board considers attendance at regular meetings held by videoconference to constitute in-person attendance at a Board meeting. Independent Trustees may also receive a meeting fee for each Board committee meeting attended in person or by telephone if so determined by the chairman of the applicable Board committee.

**Board Ownership in the Fund**

The table below sets forth the dollar range of the value of the shares of the Fund, and the dollar range of the aggregate value of the shares of all Funds overseen by a Trustee, owned beneficially by each Trustee as of December 31, 2025. For purposes of this table, beneficial ownership is defined to mean a direct or indirect pecuniary interest. Exact dollar amounts of securities held are not listed in the table. Rather, the ranges are identified according to the following key:

- Key
- A. None
  - B. \$1 - \$10,000
  - C. \$10,001 - \$50,000
  - D. \$50,001 - \$100,000
  - E. over \$100,000

Name of Trustee	LKCM Aquinas Catholic Equity Fund	Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in LKCM Funds Complex <sup>(1)</sup>
Richard J. Howell Independent Trustee	A	E
Larry J. Lockwood Independent Trustee	A	C
Steven R. Purvis Independent Trustee	A	E
Mauricio Rodriguez Independent Trustee	A	A
J. Luther King, Jr. Interested Trustee, President and Chief Executive Officer	C	E

<sup>(1)</sup> There are currently seven series comprising the Trust, six of which are offered in a separate prospectus and SAI.

#### *Board Committees*

*Audit and Compliance Committee.* The Trust has an Audit and Compliance Committee, consisting of Messrs. Howell, Lockwood, Purvis and Rodriguez. The members of the Audit and Compliance Committee are Independent Trustees. The primary responsibilities of the Audit and Compliance Committee are to make recommendations to the Board as to: the engagement or discharge of the Trust's independent registered public accounting firm (including the audit fees charged by the accounting firm); the supervision of investigations into matters relating to audits; the review with the independent registered public accounting firm of the results of audits; oversight of the Trust's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, internal control over financial reporting and independent audits; and addressing any other matters regarding audits and compliance. The Audit and Compliance Committee met two times during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025.

*Nominating Committee.* The Trust has a Nominating Committee, consisting of Messrs. Howell, Lockwood, Purvis and Rodriguez. The Nominating Committee is responsible for the selection and nomination for appointment of candidates to serve as Trustees of the Trust. The Nominating Committee will review shareholders' nominations to fill vacancies on the Board. Shareholders can submit recommendations in writing addressed to the attention of the chair of the Nominating Committee, 301 Commerce Street, Suite 1600, Fort Worth, Texas 76102. A shareholder's recommendation must include the following information about the nominee: (1) name; (2) date of birth; (3) education; (4) business, professional or other relevant experience and areas of expertise; (5) current business, professional or other relevant experience and areas of expertise; (6) current business and home addresses and contact information; (7) other board positions or prior experience; and (8) any knowledge and experience relating to investment companies and investment company governance. The Nominating Committee met once during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025.

With respect to the criteria the Nominating Committee uses for selecting nominees, a successful candidate should have certain uniform characteristics, such as a very high level of integrity, appropriate experience, and a commitment to fulfill the fiduciary duties inherent in Board membership. The Nominating Committee also will consider the extent to which potential candidates possess sufficiently diverse skill sets and diversity characteristics that would contribute to the Board's overall effectiveness.

*Qualified Legal Compliance Committee.* The Trust has a Qualified Legal Compliance Committee, consisting of Messrs. Howell, Lockwood, Purvis and Rodriguez. The members of the Qualified Legal Compliance Committee are Independent Trustees. The primary responsibility of the Trust's Qualified Legal Compliance Committee is to receive, review and take appropriate action with respect to any report made or referred to the Qualified Legal Compliance Committee by an attorney of evidence of a material violation of applicable U.S. federal or state securities law, material breach of a fiduciary duty under U.S. federal or state law or a similar material violation by the Trust or by any officer, director, employee, or agent of the Trust. The Qualified Legal Compliance Committee meets as necessary, and did not meet during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025.

The Trust does not hold annual shareholder meetings and, therefore, does not have a policy with respect to Trustees' attendance at such meetings.

#### **Principal Officers of the Trust**

The officers of the Trust conduct and supervise its daily business. As of the date of this SAI, the officers of the Trust are identified in the following table, which provides information as to their year of birth and positions with the Trust, term of office with the Trust and length of time served, their principal occupations for the past five years and, for officers who also serve as Trustees, other directorships held in public companies during the past five years.

<b>Name, Address and Age</b>	<b>Position(s) Held with the Trust</b>	<b>Term of Office and Length of Time Served<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Principal Occupation During Past Five Years</b>	<b>Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex Overseen by Trustee/Officer</b>	<b>Other Directorships Held by Trustee/Officer During the Past Five Years</b>
J. Luther King, Jr. <sup>(2)</sup> 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1940	Trustee, President and Chief Executive Officer	Since 1994	Chairman, President and Director, Luther King Capital Management Corporation since 1979.	7	TXO Partners, L.P.
Paul W. Greenwell 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1950	Vice President	Since 1996	Principal, Luther King Capital Management Corporation since 1986, Vice President and Portfolio Manager, Luther King Capital Management Corporation since 1983.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Richard Lenart 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1966	Secretary and Treasurer	Since 2006	Luther King Capital Management Corporation since 2005.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Jacob D. Smith 301 Commerce Street Suite 1600 Fort Worth, Texas 76102 Year of Birth: 1974	Chief Financial Officer  Chief Compliance Officer	Since 2010  Since 2006	General Counsel, Luther King Capital Management Corporation since 2006; Chief Compliance Officer, Luther King Capital Management Corporation from 2006-2022; Principal, Luther King Capital Management Corporation since 2013.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

<sup>(1)</sup> Each officer holds office during the lifetime of the Trust until that individual resigns, retires or is otherwise removed or replaced.

<sup>(2)</sup> Mr. King is considered to be an “interested person” of the Trust (as defined in the 1940 Act) because of his affiliation with the Adviser.

## CONTROL PERSONS AND PRINCIPAL SHAREHOLDERS

A principal shareholder is any person who owns of record or beneficially 5% or more of the outstanding shares of the Fund. A control person is one who owns beneficially or through controlled companies more than 25% of the voting securities of a company or acknowledges the existence of control. A person who controls the Fund may be able to determine the outcome of any matter submitted to a vote of shareholders. As of March 31, 2026, the following persons owned of record or are known by the Fund to own beneficially 5% or more of the outstanding shares of the Fund:

### PRINCIPAL SHAREHOLDERS

Name and Address	Percent of Fund	Record or Beneficial
Paul W. Greenwell 301 Commerce Street, Suite 1600 Fort Worth, TX 76102	9.11%	Beneficial
Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Reinvest Account Attn: Mutual Funds Dept. 211 Main St. San Francisco, CA 94105-1901	8.71%	Record
National Financial Services LLC 499 Washington Blvd., 4 <sup>th</sup> FL Jersey City, NJ 07310-2010	8.23%	Record

Shareholders with a controlling interest could affect the outcome of proxy voting or the direction of management of the Fund.

### PROXY VOTING PROCEDURES

The Fund has delegated its authority to vote proxies to the Adviser subject to the supervision of the Board of Trustees. The Adviser's proxy voting policies are summarized below.

#### GENERAL

The Adviser's Chief Compliance Officer ("Adviser CCO") is responsible for monitoring the proxy voting process, including engaging and overseeing any third-party vendor retained to review, monitor, or vote proxies.

The Adviser has engaged Institutional Shareholder Services, Inc. ("ISS") as its voting delegate to:

- (1) research and make voting determinations in accordance with the policies and procedures described herein;
- (2) vote and submit proxies in a timely manner;
- (3) handle other administrative functions of proxy voting;
- (4) maintain records of proxy statements received in connection with proxy votes and provide copies of such proxy statements promptly upon request;
- (5) maintain records of votes cast; and
- (6) provide recommendations with respect to proxy voting matters in general.

The Adviser has determined that, except as set forth below, proxies will be voted in accordance with the voting recommendations contained in the applicable domestic or global ISS Voting Guidelines in effect at the time of voting (as applicable, the "ISS Voting Guidelines"). The Adviser will periodically review the ISS Voting Guidelines, including any significant changes or updates thereto. In connection with such reviews, the Adviser may determine that it is not in the best interest of the Fund to vote proxies in accordance with the ISS Voting Guidelines on certain matters. In such event, the Adviser will follow the procedures below in connection with voting any such proxies contrary to the ISS Voting Guidelines.

In the event the ISS Voting Guidelines do not address how a proxy should be voted, the Adviser will vote the proxy in accordance with ISS recommendations. If ISS refrains from making any such recommendations, the Adviser will vote the proxy consistent with what it believes to be in the Fund's best interest. Prior to voting any proxies in the absence of ISS recommendations, however, the Adviser CCO will determine whether any material conflict of interest may exist between the Adviser and the Fund with respect thereto. If the Adviser CCO determines that any such material conflict of interest may exist, the Adviser will follow the procedures below in connection with the voting of such proxies.

There may be circumstances under which the Adviser believes that it is in the best interest of the Fund to vote proxies in a manner inconsistent with the ISS Voting Guidelines or ISS recommendations. Prior to voting any proxies inconsistent with the ISS Voting Guidelines or ISS recommendations, however, the Adviser CCO will determine whether any material conflict of interest may exist between the Adviser and the Fund with respect thereto. If the Adviser CCO determines that any such material conflict of interest may exist, the Adviser will follow the procedures below in connection with the voting of such proxies.

The Adviser maintains records relating to the implementation of its proxy voting policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, (i) records of each vote cast, which ISS maintains on the Adviser’s behalf, and (ii) documents considered or prepared by the Adviser that are material in making a decision to vote proxies on behalf of the Fund or that memorialize the basis for that decision.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Adviser periodically reviews ISS’ conflicts of interest policy and code of ethics, which address conflicts of interest that could arise in connection with proxy advisory services provided by ISS or its affiliates. The Adviser believes that ISS’ conflicts of interest policy and code of ethics contain policies and procedures that are reasonably designed to minimize any such potential conflicts of interest.

In the event that the Adviser or the Adviser CCO determines that voting a proxy may present a material conflict of interest between the Adviser and the Fund, the Adviser will (1) in cases where ISS had made a recommendation, take no further action, in which case ISS shall vote such proxy in accordance with the ISS Voting Guidelines or ISS recommendations, as applicable, (2) disclose such conflict of interest to the Board of Trustees and obtain written direction from the Board as to how to vote the proxy, (3) suggest that the Board engage another party to determine how to vote the proxy, or (4) engage another independent third party to determine how to vote the proxy.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Adviser must vote proxies in what it believes to be in the best interest of the Fund when material conflicts of interest may exist with respect thereto. The Adviser believes that these policies and procedures are reasonably designed to address material conflicts of interest that may arise as to the manner in which proxies are voted.

## MORE INFORMATION

The actual voting records relating to portfolio securities during the most recent 12-month period ended June 30 are available without charge, upon request by calling toll-free, (800) 423-6369 or by accessing the SEC’s website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

## INVESTMENT ADVISER

The investment adviser of the Fund is Luther King Capital Management Corporation, a Delaware corporation controlled by J. Luther King, Jr. (the “Adviser”). The Adviser’s parent company is Southwest JLK Corporation, a Texas corporation of which Mr. King is the majority owner and controlling shareholder. Mr. King is a member of the Board of Trustees and the President, Chief Executive Officer and Portfolio Manager of the Trust. Under an Investment Advisory Agreement (the “Agreement”) with the Fund, the Adviser manages the investment and reinvestment of the Fund’s assets, subject to the control and supervision of the Board of Trustees. The Adviser is responsible for making investment decisions for the Fund and for placing the Fund’s purchase and sale orders. Under the Agreement, the Fund pays the Adviser an advisory fee, calculated daily and payable quarterly, equal to an annual rate of 0.90% of the Fund’s average daily net assets for the quarter. However, the Adviser has contractually agreed to waive all or a portion of its advisory fees and/or reimburse the Fund through May 1, 2027 to limit the total annual operating expenses of the Fund from exceeding 1.00% of the Fund’s average daily net assets. This expense limitation excludes interest, taxes, brokerage commissions, indirect fees and expenses relating to investments in other investment companies, including money market funds (“Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses”), and extraordinary expenses. The fee waiver and expense reimbursement agreement may be terminated or changed only with the consent of the Board of Trustees.

As compensation for the services rendered by the Adviser under the Agreement, for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2023, 2024 and 2025, the Adviser earned and waived and/or reimbursed the amounts for the Fund listed below.

	Contractual Advisory Fees Incurred	Waived Fees and/or Expenses Reimbursed by the Adviser	Net Advisory Fees paid to the Adviser
Year Ended December 31, 2023	\$489,290	\$(287,159)	\$202,131
Year Ended December 31, 2024	\$535,838	\$(277,064)	\$258,774
Year Ended December 31, 2025	\$541,960	\$(280,265)	\$261,695

## PORTFOLIO MANAGERS

The portfolio managers listed below have responsibility for the day-to-day management of accounts other than the Fund. The information listed below for such other accounts is as of December 31, 2025.

	Number of Other Accounts Managed and Assets by Account Type			Number of Accounts and Assets for which Advisory Fee is Performance Based		
	Registered Investment Companies	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	Other Accounts	Registered Investment Companies	Other Pooled Investment Vehicles	Other Accounts
Paul Greenwell	0	0	189	0	0	0
	\$0	\$0	\$1.6 billion	\$0	\$0	\$0
Scot C. Hollmann	3	0	356	0	0	0
	\$899 million	\$0	\$2.6 billion	\$0	\$0	\$0

## Conflicts of Interest

The portfolio managers are responsible for managing the Fund and other separately managed accounts, including accounts for investment companies, employee benefit plans, pension plans, endowments, foundations, trusts, high net worth individuals, and pooled investment vehicles. When a portfolio manager is responsible for the management of more than one account, the potential arises for the portfolio manager to favor one account over another. The principal types of conflicts of interest that may arise are discussed below. The Adviser believes that it has established policies and procedures that are reasonably designed to mitigate these potential conflicts of interest.

- The portfolio managers are responsible for managing other accounts that may have investment objectives, guidelines, strategies, risk profiles or other considerations that may differ from those of the Fund. The portfolio managers make investment decisions for each account based on its investment objectives and guidelines, policies, and other relevant considerations. Consequently, the portfolio managers may purchase or sell securities at the same or different times for one account and not another account or the Fund. The portfolio managers may also make investment decisions on behalf of other accounts that are directly or indirectly contrary to investment decisions made on behalf of the Fund, or make investment decisions that are similar to those made for the Fund, any of which has the potential to adversely impact the Fund depending on market conditions.
- The portfolio managers may purchase or sell for their own account securities that are purchased or sold on behalf of the Fund. The portfolio managers also have a beneficial interest in pooled investment vehicles or other accounts managed by the Adviser, other than the Fund. The Adviser has implemented a code of ethics and other policies and procedures in an effort to mitigate these potential conflicts of interest.
- The portfolio managers could favor one account over another in allocating new investment opportunities of a limited nature, such as initial public offerings and private placements. The Adviser has implemented policies and procedures, including a rotational system for allocating initial public offerings, in an effort to ensure that investment opportunities of a limited nature are allocated fairly and equitably among eligible accounts.
- The portfolio managers could favor one account over another in the order in which trades for accounts are placed. If the portfolio managers determine to purchase a security for more than one account in an aggregate amount that may influence the market price of the security, accounts that purchased or sold the security first may receive a more favorable price than accounts that made subsequent transactions. In addition, the Fund and other accounts, including pooled investment vehicles, managed by the portfolio managers may participate in aggregated purchase or sale transactions. To the extent that accounts participating in aggregated trades do not receive their full allocation, a potential conflict of interest exists because the Adviser and portfolio managers have an incentive to allocate trades to accounts in which the Adviser and portfolio managers have a financial interest. The Adviser has implemented trade allocation and aggregation policies and procedures in an effort to mitigate this potential conflict of interest.
- The portfolio managers are responsible for managing other accounts and pooled investment vehicles, some of which entitle the Adviser to incentive fees and/or management fees exceeding those paid by the Fund. This compensation structure presents a potential conflict of interest because the Adviser and the portfolio managers may be incentivized to favor such accounts over the Fund.
- The Adviser and the portfolio managers have significant personal investments in some of the private investment funds managed by the Adviser. As a result of such investments, the Adviser and the portfolio managers may be motivated to favor these funds over the Fund.
- Under Section 28(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, the Adviser may pay commissions to brokers for the Fund's transactions that exceed the amount of commissions that would be charged by another broker for the same transactions, provided that the Adviser determines in good faith that the amount of commissions paid are reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and research services provided by such broker, either in terms of a particular transaction or the Adviser's overall responsibilities with respect to accounts for which it exercises investment discretion. Pursuant to Section 28(e), the Adviser has entered into soft dollar and commission sharing arrangements with third parties and brokers for eligible brokerage and research products and services. A potential conflict of interest may exist because the Adviser receives these brokerage and research products and services from brokers in exchange for directing commissions from the Fund's transactions, rather than paying for these products and services with its own assets. The Adviser has implemented policies and procedures governing its use of such soft dollar and commission sharing arrangements.

## Compensation

As an independent firm, the Adviser has full control over its compensation structure. The Adviser seeks to maintain a compensation program that is competitively positioned to attract and retain high-caliber investment professionals. Each member of the professional staff is provided a salary. They also are eligible to participate in the Adviser's profit sharing plan. The majority of compensation is derived from bonuses, which are discretionary and based on individual merit as well as success of the Adviser in any given year. Criteria for individual bonuses include, among other factors, stock selection, relationship building, investment performance, client service, and portfolio management. There is no standard formula or method for determining bonuses and the factors considered for bonuses vary by individual. Compensation is not based directly on the performance of the Fund or the net asset levels of the Fund.

## Ownership of Securities

As of March 31, 2026, the officers and Trustees of the Trust as a group owned approximately 9.37% of the Fund. Each portfolio manager of the Fund owned the following amounts of shares of the Fund as of December 31, 2025:



## Key

- A. None
- B. \$1 – \$10,000
- C. \$10,001 – \$50,000
- D. \$50,001 – \$100,000
- E. \$100,001 – \$500,000
- F. \$500,001 – \$1,000,000
- G. Over \$1,000,000

Name of Portfolio Manager	Dollar Range of Shares Owned
Paul W. Greenwell	G
Scot C. Hollmann	A

## PORTFOLIO TRANSACTIONS AND BROKERAGE

The Agreement authorizes the Adviser to select the brokers or dealers that will execute the purchases and sales of investment securities for the Fund and directs the Adviser to use its best efforts in seeking best execution with respect to all securities transactions for the Fund. In selecting brokers or dealers for securities transactions for the Fund, the Adviser may consider, among other things: the quality of executions and liquidity provided by the broker; the ability of the broker to maintain confidentiality of client orders and order flow; the ability of the broker to minimize market impact for client transactions; the commission rates charged by the broker in comparison to the rates of other brokers for similar transactions; the broker's provision of eligible brokerage and research services; the broker's ability to obtain timely, accurate, and cost-effective executions; the ability of the broker to accurately communicate the nature of the market for a particular security; the broker's execution policies and commitment to providing best execution; the size and volume of the broker's order flow; and the efficiency and accuracy of the broker's operations area with regard to settlement procedures.

As permitted by Section 28(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, the Adviser may cause the Fund to pay higher commission rates than the lowest available when the Adviser believes in good faith that the commissions paid are reasonable in light of the value of the brokerage or research services provided by the broker, either in terms of a particular transaction or the Adviser's overall responsibilities with respect to accounts for which it has investment discretion. These services generally include third-party and proprietary analyses and reports concerning issuers, industries, securities, general economic and market conditions and trends, portfolio strategy; third-party and proprietary analyses and reports regarding the value of securities, the advisability of purchasing or selling securities, and the availability of sellers and purchasers of securities; and services related to effecting securities transactions and performing functions incidental thereto. The Adviser may use some of these services in providing investment advisory services to all of its clients, and not all of these services may be used by the Adviser in providing investment advisory services to the Fund. During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, the Fund directed transactions to brokers pursuant to which the brokers provided third-party or proprietary research or brokerage services to the Adviser. Pursuant to these arrangements to receive research and brokerage services, during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025 it is estimated that the Fund paid total commissions of approximately \$1,300 on transactions with a principal value of approximately \$5.7 million.

It is not the Adviser's practice to allocate brokerage or principal business on the basis of sales of shares of the Fund that may be made through intermediary brokers or dealers. However, the Adviser may place orders with qualified broker-dealers who recommend the Fund or who act as agents in the purchase of shares of the Fund for their clients, without considering these factors in selecting a broker-dealer. The Adviser does not have an affiliated broker, therefore it has not engaged in any affiliated brokerage transactions.

The aggregate amount of brokerage commissions paid by the Fund during the fiscal years ended December 31, 2023, 2024 and 2025 was \$18,524, \$6,264, and \$8,140, respectively.

Some securities considered for investment by the Fund may also be appropriate for other clients served by the Adviser. If purchases or sales of securities consistent with the investment policies of the Fund and one or more of these other clients serviced by the Adviser are considered at or about the same time, transactions in such securities may be aggregated and allocated among the Fund and such clients in accordance with the Adviser's allocation policies and procedures or in any other manner deemed fair and reasonable by the Adviser.

As of December 31, 2025, the Fund did not own the securities of its "regular brokers or dealers" (as defined in the 1940 Act) or their parent companies.

## PORTFOLIO TURNOVER

Although the Fund generally will not invest for short-term trading purposes, portfolio securities may be sold without regard to the length of time they have been held when, in the opinion of the Adviser, investment or other considerations warrant such action. Portfolio turnover rate is calculated by dividing (1) the lesser of purchases or sales of long-term portfolio securities for the fiscal year by (2) the monthly average of the value of long-term portfolio securities owned during the fiscal year. A 100% turnover rate would occur if all the securities in the Fund's portfolio, with the exception of securities whose maturities at the time of acquisition were one year or less, were sold and either repurchased or replaced within one year. A high rate of portfolio turnover (100% or more) generally leads to higher transaction costs and may result in a greater number of transactions on which net taxable gains are realized. Portfolio turnover may vary significantly from year to year due to a variety of factors, including fluctuating volume of shareholder purchase and redemption orders, market conditions, investment strategy changes, and/or changes in the Adviser's investment outlook.

The Fund had portfolio turnover rates of 11% and 9% for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2024 and 2025, respectively.

## CUSTODIAN

As custodian of the Fund's assets, U.S. Bank, N.A. (the "Custodian"), 1555 N. RiverCenter Drive, Suite 302, Milwaukee, WI 53212, has custody of all securities and cash of the Fund, delivers and receives payment for securities sold, receives and pays for securities purchased, collects income from investments, and performs other duties, all as directed by the officers of the Trust. U.S. Bank, N.A. and Fund Services (as defined below) are affiliates.

## TRANSFER AGENT

U.S. Bancorp Fund Services, LLC, doing business as U.S. Bank Global Fund Services ("Fund Services"), 615 East Michigan Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53202 serves as transfer agent, dividend disbursing agent and shareholder servicing agent for the Fund. In such capacity, Fund Services' responsibilities include: receiving and processing all orders for purchases, exchanges and redemptions of Fund shares; responding to shareholder inquiries and instructions concerning their accounts; updating of shareholder accounts to reflect declaration and payment of dividends and other distributions; and preparing and distributing account statements and tax documents to shareholders regarding their accounts. U.S. Bank, N.A. and Fund Services are affiliates.

## ADMINISTRATOR

Pursuant to the Fund Administration Agreement, Fund Services provides the Fund with administrative services. The services under this Agreement are subject to the supervision of the Board of Trustees and officers of the Trust, and include day-to-day administration of matters necessary to the Fund's operations, maintenance of their records, preparation of reports, compliance testing of the Fund's activities, and preparation of periodic updates of the registration statement under federal and state laws. For administration services, Fund Services receives from the Fund a fee, calculated daily and paid monthly. U.S. Bank, N.A. and Fund Services are affiliates.

Administration fees incurred by the Fund during the fiscal years ended December 31, 2023, 2024, and 2025 were \$65,851, and \$75,114, and \$118,457, respectively.

Fund Services also acts as Transfer Agent, Dividend-Disbursing Agent, and Fund Accountant for the Fund.

## DISTRIBUTOR

Quasar Distributors, LLC (the "Distributor"), 190 Middle Street, Suite 301, Portland, ME 04101, a registered broker-dealer and member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, distributes the Fund's shares. The Distributor uses its best efforts to distribute the Fund's shares, which shares are offered for sale by the Fund continuously at net asset value per share without the imposition of a sales charge. The Fund pay that portion of the compensation owed to the Distributor that is permitted under Rule 12b-1 of the 1940 Act and the Distribution Plan (as defined below), and the Adviser pays the remaining portion of any such compensation.

## DISTRIBUTION PLAN

The Board has adopted a Distribution Plan pursuant to Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act (the "Distribution Plan"). Pursuant to this Distribution Plan, the Fund can pay up to an aggregate maximum of 1.00% per annum of its average daily net assets for the distribution and promotion of its shares and the retention of shares by Fund shareholders. These services include, but are not limited to, the printing of Prospectuses, Statements of Additional Information, reports used for sales purposes, advertisements, expenses of preparation and printing of sales literature, other distribution-related expenses, and providing services to shareholders. The Board of Trustees has authorized payments under the Distribution Plan at an annual rate of 0.10% of the Fund's average daily net assets.

The Distribution Plan is regulated by Rule 12b-1 under the 1940 Act, which requires that the Board receive and review at least quarterly reports concerning the amount and purpose of expenses which are made, and that the Distribution Plan may be continued from year-to-year only if the Board, including a majority of the Independent Trustees, concludes at least annually that continuation of the Distribution Plan is reasonably likely to benefit the Trust and its shareholders.

The Fund paid the following amounts in 12b-1 expenses for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025:

Advertising/Marketing .....	\$37,500
Printing/Postage .....	\$0
Payment to Distributor .....	\$8,446
Payment to Dealers .....	\$14,434
Compensation to Sales Personnel .....	\$0
Other .....	\$0
Total .....	\$60,379

## PAYMENTS TO FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

A financial intermediary through which you purchase your shares may receive all or a portion of the Distribution Plan Rule 12b-1 fees, if applicable, discussed above. In addition to those payments, the Adviser makes additional cash payments to certain intermediaries in connection with the promotion and sale of shares of the Fund. The Adviser and the Fund also make payments for certain sub-transfer agency and administrative services. Payments made by the Adviser are from its own resources. The categories described below are not mutually exclusive. The same financial intermediary may receive payments under more than one or all categories.

*Revenue Sharing Payments.* The Adviser makes revenue sharing payments as incentives to certain financial intermediaries to promote and sell shares of the Fund. The benefits that the Adviser receives when it makes these payments include, among other things, placing the Fund on the financial intermediary's funds sales system. The Adviser compensates financial intermediaries differently depending typically on the level and/or type of considerations provided by the financial intermediary.

Revenue sharing payments may be calculated on sales of shares of the Fund ("Sales-Based Payments"). Such payments also may be calculated on the average daily net assets of the Fund attributable to that particular financial intermediary ("Asset-Based Payments"). Sales-Based Payments primarily create incentives to make new sales of shares of the Fund and Asset-Based Payments primarily create incentives to retain previously sold shares of the Fund in shareholder accounts. The Adviser may pay a financial intermediary either or both Sales-Based Payments and Asset-Based Payments.

*Administrative and Processing Support Payments.* Firms that establish omnibus accounts and provide substantially the same services to their clients as are provided by Fund Services to direct shareholders of the Fund may receive sub-transfer agent fees for such services from the Fund. In an omnibus account, the Fund maintain a single account in the name of a financial intermediary such as a broker, dealer, record-keeper or other service provider and the financial intermediary maintains all of the individual shareholder accounts.

Record-keeping and shareholder services typically include: establishing and maintaining shareholder accounts and records; recording shareholder account balances and changes thereto; arranging for the wiring of funds; providing statements to shareholders; furnishing proxy materials, periodic reports of the Fund, prospectuses and other communications to current shareholders as required; transmitting shareholder transaction information; and providing information in order to assist the Fund in its compliance with federal and state securities laws. The Fund typically would be paying these shareholder servicing fees directly if the financial intermediary did not hold all of its customer accounts in a single omnibus account with the Fund. Likewise, for many retirement plans, a third party administrator may open an omnibus account with the Fund and the administrator will then maintain all of the participant accounts. The Adviser and the Fund may make payments to certain financial intermediaries for certain administrative services, including record keeping and sub-accounting shareholder accounts. The Adviser, the Distributor and the Fund also may make payments to certain financial intermediaries in connection with client account maintenance support, statement preparation and transaction processing.

*Other Cash Payments.* From time to time, the Adviser, at its own expense, may provide additional compensation to financial intermediaries which sell or arrange for the sale of shares of the Fund. This additional compensation may be offered to the extent not prohibited by state laws or any self-regulatory agency, such as Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. Such compensation may include financial assistance to financial intermediaries that enables the Adviser to: (1) participate in and/or present at conferences or seminars for invited registered representatives and other employees, (2) participate in client entertainment, client and investor events, and other financial intermediary-sponsored events, and (3) pay expenses incurred by registered representatives and other employees in connection with client prospecting, retention and due diligence trips.

The Adviser is motivated to make the payments described above since they promote the sale of Fund shares and the retention of those investments by clients of financial intermediaries. To the extent financial intermediaries sell more shares of the Fund or retain shares of the Fund in their clients' accounts, the Adviser benefits from the incremental management and other fees paid to the Adviser by the Fund with respect to those assets.

In certain cases these payments could be significant to the financial intermediary. Your financial intermediary may charge you additional fees or commissions other than those disclosed in the Prospectus and this SAI. You may ask your financial intermediary about any payments it receives from the Adviser or the Fund, as well as about fees and/or commissions it charges.

## INTERESTS OF CERTAIN PERSONS

With the exception of the Adviser, no "interested person" of the Fund, as defined in the 1940 Act, and no Trustee of the Trust who is not an "interested person" has or had a direct or indirect financial interest in the Distribution Plan or any related agreement.

## CODE OF ETHICS

The Trust, Adviser and Distributor have each adopted a written Code of Ethics. These Codes of Ethics govern the personal securities transactions of trustees, directors, officers and employees who may have access to current trading information of the Fund. These Codes of Ethics permit such persons to invest in the Fund and/or other securities for their personal accounts, including securities that may be purchased or held by the Fund, subject to certain conditions. These Codes of Ethics include reporting and other obligations to monitor personal transactions and confirm that such transactions do not disadvantage the Fund.

## PURCHASE AND PRICING OF SHARES

### PURCHASE OF SHARES

The Fund will be deemed to have received a purchase or redemption order when an authorized broker or, if applicable, a broker's designee receives the order.

**Purchasing Shares with Liquid Securities.** Certain clients of the Adviser may, subject to the approval of the Trust, purchase shares of the Fund with liquid securities that are eligible for purchase by the Fund (consistent with the Fund's investment policies and restrictions) and that have a value that is readily ascertainable (and not established only by fair valuation procedures) as evidenced by a listing on the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE") or NASDAQ. These transactions will be effected only if the Adviser intends to retain the security in the Fund as an investment. Assets so purchased by the Fund will be valued in generally the same manner as they would be valued for purposes of pricing the Fund's shares, if such assets were included in the Fund's assets at the time of purchase.

**Automatic Investment Program.** The Automatic Investment Program ("AIP") permits investors who own shares of the Fund with a value of \$2,000 or more to purchase shares (minimum of \$100 per transaction) at regular intervals selected by the investor. Provided the investor's financial institution allows automatic withdrawals, shares are purchased by transferring funds from an

investor's checking or savings account. The financial institution must be a member of the Automatic Clearing House network. There is no charge for this service. A \$25 fee will be charged if the investor's bank rejects the scheduled transaction. At the investor's option, the account designated will be debited in the specified amount, and shares will be purchased on a specified day or days of a month.

The AIP is one means by which an investor may use "dollar cost averaging" in making investments. Instead of trying to time market performance, a fixed dollar amount is invested in shares at predetermined intervals. This may help investors to reduce their average cost per share because the agreed upon fixed investment amount allows more shares to be purchased during periods of lower share prices and fewer shares during periods of higher prices. In order to be effective, dollar cost averaging should usually be followed on a sustained, consistent basis. Investors should be aware, however, that shares bought using dollar cost averaging are purchased without regard to their price on the day of investment or market trends. In addition, while investors may find dollar cost averaging to be beneficial, it will not prevent a loss if an investor ultimately redeems his or her shares at a price that is lower than their purchase price.

To establish the AIP, an investor must complete the appropriate sections of the New Account Application. Please call the Trust at 800-423-6369 if you have questions. An investor may cancel his or her participation in this Program or change the amount of purchase at any time by notifying the Transfer Agent by telephone or in writing five days prior to the effective date of the next transaction. The Trust may modify or terminate this privilege at any time or charge a service fee, although no such fee currently is contemplated.

## **PRICING OF SHARES**

Shares of the Fund are sold and redeemed on a continual basis at the net asset value per share next computed following acceptance of an order by the Fund. The Fund's net asset value per share for the purpose of pricing purchase and redemption orders is normally determined as of the scheduled close of normal trading (generally 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on each day the NYSE is scheduled to be open for trading. The NYSE is generally scheduled to be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

Equity securities listed or traded on a U.S. securities exchange for which market quotations are readily available are valued at the last quoted sale price on the exchange on which the security is primarily traded. Nasdaq Global Market securities are valued at the Nasdaq Official Closing Price. Unlisted U.S. equity securities and listed U.S. equity securities not traded on a particular valuation date are valued at the mean of the most recent quoted bid and ask price on the relevant exchanges or markets.

Equity securities listed on a foreign exchange for which market quotations are readily available are valued at the last quoted sales price on the exchange on which the security is primarily traded.

Debt securities are normally valued at the mean of the closing bid and ask price and/or by using a combination of broker quotations or evaluated prices provided by an independent pricing service. Futures and options on futures are valued at the settlement prices established each day on the principal exchange on which they are traded. Forward contracts are valued based on the forward rate using information provided by an independent pricing service. Other assets and securities for which no market or broker quotations or evaluated prices are readily available are valued in good faith at fair value using guidelines approved by the Board of Trustees.

Rule 2a-5 under the Investment Company Act (the "Valuation Rule") establishes requirements for determining fair value in good faith for purposes of the Investment Company Act, including related oversight and reporting requirements. The Valuation Rule also defines when market quotations are "readily available" for purposes of the Investment Company Act, the threshold for determining whether a security must be fair valued.

The Valuation Rule permits the Fund's board to designate the Fund's investment adviser as "valuation designee" to perform the Fund's fair value determinations subject to board oversight and certain reporting and other requirements intended to ensure that the registered investment company's board receives the information it needs to oversee the investment adviser's fair value determinations. The Board has designated the Adviser as valuation designee under the Valuation Rule to perform fair value functions in accordance with the requirements of the Valuation Rule. The Adviser may value securities at fair value in good faith pursuant to the Adviser's and the Fund's procedures. The Adviser may use prices provided by independent pricing services to assist in the fair valuation of the Fund's portfolio securities.

The policies and procedures adopted by the Fund and the Adviser authorize the Adviser to fair value a security in good faith if, among other things, the Adviser determines that (i) closing prices of foreign securities do not reflect their fair market value due to events that occur between the closing of foreign markets and the time at which the Fund calculates its NAV, (ii) trading in a security is halted and does not resume prior to the closing of the exchange or other market on which such security normally trades, or (iii) the price for such security provided by the Fund's independent pricing services appears invalid, is not readily available, or otherwise provides a valuation that in the judgment of the Adviser does not represent the fair market value of such security. Prices provided by independent pricing services may be used to assist in the fair valuation of the Fund's portfolio securities. For foreign securities, such fair value prices generally are based on such independent pricing services' proprietary multi-factor models that measure movements in relevant indices, market indicators and other factors between the time the relevant foreign markets have closed and the time the Fund calculates its NAV, and therefore may differ from quoted or official closing prices for such foreign securities in such foreign markets. If fair value pricing is utilized, the fair values assigned to the Fund's foreign investments may not be the quoted or published prices of the investments on their primary markets or exchanges.

An example of how the Fund calculated its total offering price per share as of December 31, 2025 is as follows:

<u>Net Assets</u>	=	<u>Net Asset Value per share</u>
<b>Shares Outstanding</b>		
\$59,653,305	=	\$17.72
3,366,428		

### PORTFOLIO HOLDINGS INFORMATION

It is the policy of LKCM Funds to protect the confidentiality of portfolio holdings and prevent the selective disclosure of non-public information concerning the Fund. No information concerning the portfolio holdings of the Fund may be disclosed to any person except as provided below.

The Adviser and the Fund maintain portfolio holdings disclosure policies that govern the timing and circumstances of disclosure to shareholders and third parties of information regarding the portfolio investments held by the Fund. These portfolio holdings disclosure policies have been approved by the Board of Trustees. Disclosure of the Fund's complete holdings is required to be made quarterly within 70 days of the end of each fiscal semi-annual period in the Funds' Form N-CSR filed with the SEC. These reports are available, free of charge, on the EDGAR database on the SEC's website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov) and on the Funds' website at [www.aquinasfunds.com](http://www.aquinasfunds.com). Monthly portfolio disclosures are filed quarterly with the SEC on Form N-PORT, with quarter-end disclosures being made public 60 days after the end of each fiscal quarter. These reports are available, free of charge, on the EDGAR database on the SEC's website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov). In addition, the Fund also makes available on the Fund's website a complete schedule of its portfolio holdings no sooner than 30 days following the end of each calendar quarter. Information contained within Fund Fact Sheets is made publicly available on the website upon completion (generally within 10-15 days after the close of the calendar quarter). In an effort to prevent parties from potentially misusing portfolio holdings information, the Fund will generally only disclose the Fund Fact Sheets and complete schedules of portfolio holdings as of the end of the most recent calendar quarter no earlier than 10 days and 30 days after the end of the calendar quarter, respectively.

In addition, the Fund's service providers, including the administrator, custodian, legal counsel, proxy voting administrator, independent pricing service and independent registered public accounting firm, receive portfolio holdings information in connection with their services to the Fund. The Fund's service providers have a duty to keep nonpublic information about the Fund, some of which is received on a daily basis with no lag time, confidential based on existing laws and due to the nature of their roles with the Fund. An officer of the Adviser or the Chief Compliance Officer of the Fund may distribute (or authorize the Fund's administrator to distribute) portfolio holdings to rating and ranking agencies for a legitimate business purpose on a quarterly basis. Except as noted above, this information is provided no earlier than 30 days after the end of a calendar quarter and no compensation is received by the Adviser or the Fund as consideration for such disclosure. The Fund's Chief Compliance Officer may waive certain of the requirements of this policy. The Board of Trustees and the Adviser may, on a case-by-case basis, impose additional restrictions on the dissemination of portfolio holdings information beyond those required by the Fund's policy. Notwithstanding these policies, the Fund may disclose portfolio holdings information to the extent required by applicable law.

The Fund's Chief Compliance Officer will report any violations of these policies to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis. In no event shall the Adviser, its affiliates or employees, or the Fund receive any direct or indirect compensation in connection with the disclosure of information about the Fund's portfolio holdings.

If the disclosure of portfolio holdings presents a conflict of interest between the shareholders and the Adviser, the Fund's principal distributor or any of their respective affiliates, then such conflict will be reported to the Board for its consideration prior to the dissemination of portfolio holdings information.

### EXCHANGES

Shareholders of the Fund may exchange shares of the Fund for shares of another series of the Trust.

### REDEMPTIONS IN KIND

The Trust has made an election with the SEC to pay in cash all redemptions requested by any shareholder of record limited in amount during any 90-day period to the lesser of (i) \$250,000 or (ii) 1% of the net assets of the Fund at the beginning of such period. Such commitment is irrevocable without the prior approval of the SEC. Redemptions in excess of the above limits may be paid in whole or in part in investment securities or in cash, as the Trustees may deem advisable; however, payment will be made wholly in cash unless the Trustees believe that economic or market conditions exist which would make such a practice detrimental to the best interests of the Fund. If redemptions are paid in investment securities the redeeming shareholders might incur brokerage expenses if they converted these securities to cash. Securities used to make such "in-kind" redemptions will be readily marketable. The method of valuing such securities will be the same as the method of valuing Fund securities described under "Pricing of Shares," and such valuation will be made as of the same time the redemption price is determined.

### TAXATION

#### TAXATION OF THE FUND

The following discussion of certain federal tax matters concerning the Fund and the purchase, ownership and disposition of Fund shares is not complete and may not deal with all aspects of federal taxation that may be relevant to you in light of your particular circumstances. This discussion is based on the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), the regulations promulgated thereunder and judicial and administrative interpretations thereof, publicly available as of the date hereof; all these authorities are subject to change, which may be applied retroactively. You should consult your own tax advisers with regard to the federal tax

consequences to you of the purchase, ownership and disposition of Fund shares, as well as the tax consequences thereof to you arising under the laws of any state, locality, foreign country or other taxing jurisdiction.

The Fund, which is treated as a separate corporation for federal tax purposes, intends to continue to qualify annually for treatment as a “regulated investment company” under Subchapter M of Chapter 1 of Subtitle A of the Code (“RIC”). If so qualified, the Fund (but not its shareholders) will not be liable for federal income tax to the extent it distributes its net earnings and realized net gains to its shareholders on a timely basis.

To continue to qualify for treatment as a RIC for a taxable year, the Fund must distribute to its shareholders at least the sum of 90% of its investment company taxable income (consisting generally of net investment income, the excess, if any, of net short-term capital gain over net long-term capital loss (“net short-term capital gain”) and net gains and losses from certain foreign currency transactions, if any, all determined without regard to any deduction for dividends paid) and 90% of its net exempt interest income for that year (“Distribution Requirement”) and must meet several additional requirements. With respect to the Fund, these requirements include the following: (1) the Fund must derive at least 90% of its gross income for the taxable year from dividends, interest, payments with respect to securities loans and gains (without regard to losses) from the sale or other disposition of securities or foreign currencies, or other income derived with respect to its business of investing in securities or those currencies and income from qualified publicly traded partnerships (“Income Requirement”); and (2) at the close of each quarter of the Fund’s taxable year, (a) at least 50% of the value of its total assets must be represented by cash and cash items, Government securities, securities of other RICs and other securities, with these other securities limited, in respect of any one issuer, to an amount that does not exceed 5% of that value and that does not represent more than 10% of the issuer’s outstanding voting securities, and (b) not more than 25% of that value may be invested in (i) the securities (other than Government securities or securities of other RICs) of any one issuer, (ii) the securities (other than securities of other RICs) of two or more issuers the Fund controls (by owning 20% or more of their voting power) that are determined to be engaged in the same, similar or related trades or businesses or (iii) interests in qualified publicly traded partnerships (“Diversification Requirements”).

If the Fund fails to qualify for treatment as a RIC for any taxable year – either (1) by failing to satisfy the Distribution Requirement, even if it satisfies the Income and Diversification Requirements, or (2) by failing to satisfy the Income Requirement and/or Diversification Requirements and is unable, or determines not, to avail itself of Code provisions that enable a RIC to cure a failure to satisfy any of the Income and Diversification Requirements as long as the failure “is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect” and the RIC pays a deductible tax calculated in accordance with those provisions and meets certain other requirements – then for federal tax purposes for any taxable year, it would be treated as a regular corporation for federal tax purposes. In that case, it would be subject to federal income tax, and any distributions that it made to its shareholders would not be deductible by it and would be taxable to them as ordinary income (with no part treated as a capital gain distribution) to the extent of its earnings and profits, except for the part of those dividends that is “qualified dividend income” (described in the Prospectus), which is subject to maximum federal income tax rates of 15% and 20% for certain shareholders. That treatment would increase the cost of investing in the Fund for shareholders and would make it more economical for shareholders to invest directly in securities held by the Fund instead of investing indirectly in those securities through the Fund.

The Fund will be subject to a nondeductible 4% excise tax (“Excise Tax”) to the extent it fails to distribute by the end of any calendar year substantially all of its ordinary income for that year and capital gain net income for the one-year period ending on October 31 (or December 31, if it so elects) of that year, plus certain other amounts.

If the Fund has an “appreciated financial position” – generally, an interest (including an interest through a short sale with respect to any stock, debt instrument (other than “straight debt”) or partnership interest the fair market value of which exceeds its adjusted basis – and enters into a “constructive sale” of the position, the Fund will be treated as having made an actual sale thereof, with the result that it will recognize gain at that time. A constructive sale generally consists of a short sale or an offsetting notional principal contract the Fund or a related person enters into with respect to the same or substantially identical property. In addition, if the appreciated financial position is itself a short sale or such a contract, acquisition of the underlying property or substantially identical property will be deemed a constructive sale. The foregoing will not apply, however, to any transaction by the Fund during any taxable year that would otherwise be treated as a constructive sale if the transaction is closed within 30 days after the end of that year and the Fund holds the appreciated financial position unhedged for 60 days after that closing (i.e., at no time during that 60-day period is the Fund’s risk of loss regarding that position reduced by reason of certain specified transactions with respect to substantially identical or related property, such as having an option to sell, being contractually obligated to sell, making a short sale or granting an option to buy substantially identical stock or securities).

**Investments in Foreign Securities.** Dividends and interest the Fund receives, and gains it realizes, on foreign securities, may be subject to income, withholding or other taxes imposed by foreign countries and U.S. possessions that would reduce the yield and/or total return on its securities. Tax conventions between certain countries and the United States may reduce or eliminate those taxes, however, and many foreign countries do not impose taxes on capital gains in respect of investments by foreign investors.

The Fund may invest in the stock of “passive foreign investment companies” (“PFICs”). A PFIC is any foreign corporation (with certain exceptions) that, in general, meets either of the following tests for a taxable year:

- (1) at least 75% of its gross income is passive; or
- (2) an average of at least 50% of its assets produce, or are held for the production of, passive income.

Under certain circumstances, the Fund will be subject to federal income tax on a portion of any “excess distribution” it receives on the stock of a PFIC and of any gain on disposition of the stock (collectively, “PFIC income”), plus interest thereon, even if the Fund distributes the PFIC income as a taxable dividend to its shareholders. The balance of the PFIC income will be included in the Fund’s investment company taxable income and, accordingly, will not be taxable to it to the extent it distributes that income to its shareholders. Fund distributions attributable to PFIC income will not be eligible for the 15% and 20% maximum federal income tax rates on “qualified dividend income” mentioned above.

If the Fund invests in a PFIC and elects to treat the PFIC as a “qualified electing fund” (“QEF”), then in lieu of the foregoing tax and interest obligation, the Fund would be required to include in income each taxable year its pro rata share of the QEF’s annual

ordinary earnings and net capital gain even if the QEF did not distribute those earnings and gain to the Fund. In most instances it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to make this election because of certain requirements thereof.

The Fund may elect to “mark to market” its stock in any PFIC. “Marking-to-market,” in this context, means including in gross income (and treating as ordinary income) each taxable year the excess, if any, of the fair market value of the stock over the Fund’s adjusted basis therein as of the end of that year. Pursuant to the election, the Fund also may deduct (as an ordinary, not a capital, loss) the excess, if any, of its adjusted basis in PFIC stock over the fair market value thereof as of the taxable year-end, but only to the extent of any net mark-to-market gains with respect to that stock the Fund included in income for prior taxable years under the election. The Fund’s adjusted basis in each PFIC’s stock subject to the election would be adjusted to reflect the amounts of income included and deductions taken thereunder.

Investors should be aware that determining whether a foreign corporation is a PFIC is a fact-intensive determination that is based on various facts and circumstances and thus is subject to change, and the principles and methodology used therein are subject to interpretation. As a result, the Fund may not be able, at the time it acquires a foreign corporation’s shares, to ascertain whether the corporation is a PFIC, and a foreign corporation may become a PFIC after the Fund acquires shares therein. While the Fund generally will seek to avoid investing in PFIC shares to avoid the tax consequences detailed above, there are no guarantees that it will be able to do so and it reserves the right to make such investments as a matter of its investment policy.

Gains or losses (1) from the disposition of foreign currencies, (2) on the disposition of a debt security denominated in a foreign currency that are attributable to fluctuations in the value of the foreign currency between the dates of acquisition and disposition of the security and (3) that are attributable to exchange rate fluctuations between the time the Fund accrues interest, dividends or other receivables or expenses or other liabilities denominated in a foreign currency and the time it actually collects the receivables or pays the liabilities, generally are treated as ordinary income or loss. These gains or losses will increase or decrease the amount of investment company taxable income available to the Fund for distribution to its shareholders as ordinary income, rather than increasing or decreasing the amount of its net capital gain.

For federal income tax purposes, net capital losses incurred by the Fund in a particular taxable year can be carried forward to offset net capital gains in any subsequent year until such loss carryforwards have been fully used, and such capital losses carried forward will retain their character as either short-term or long-term capital losses. To the extent subsequent net capital gains are offset by such losses, they would not result in federal income tax liability to the Fund and would not be distributed as such to shareholders.

The Fund currently has no capital loss carryovers.

## **TAXATION OF THE SHAREHOLDERS**

Distributions of net capital gain, if any, designated as capital gains dividends are taxable to a shareholder as long-term capital gains, regardless of how long the shareholder has held Fund shares. A distribution of an amount in excess of the Fund’s current and accumulated earnings and profits will be treated by a shareholder as a return of capital which is applied against and reduces the shareholder’s basis in his or her shares. To the extent that the amount of any such distribution exceeds the shareholder’s basis in his or her shares, the excess will be treated by the shareholder as gain from a sale or exchange of the shares. Distributions of gains from the sale of investments that the Fund owned for one year or less will be taxable as ordinary income.

The Fund may elect to retain its net capital gain or a portion thereof for investment and be taxed at corporate rates on the amount retained. In such case, it may designate the retained amount as undistributed capital gains in a notice to its shareholders who will be treated as if each received a distribution of his pro rata share of such gain, with the result that each shareholder will (i) be required to report his pro rata share of such gain on his tax return as long-term capital gain, (ii) receive a refundable tax credit for his pro rata share of tax paid by the Fund on the gain and (iii) increase the tax basis for his shares by an amount equal to the deemed distribution less the tax credit.

If Fund shares are sold at a loss after being held for six months or less, the loss will be treated as a long-term, instead of a short-term, capital loss to the extent of any capital gain distributions received on those shares.

The Code generally allows individuals and certain non-corporate entities a deduction for 20% of qualified REIT dividends. Regulations allow a RIC to pass the character of its qualified REIT dividends through to its shareholders provided certain holding period requirements are met. As a result, individuals or other shareholders eligible for the deduction with respect to qualified REIT dividends will also be eligible to receive the benefit of this deduction with respect to qualified REIT dividends received by the Fund that are thereafter included in Fund dividends to shareholders, provided that the eligible shareholders have held their Fund shares for at least 46 days during the 91-day period beginning on the date that is 45 days before the date on which the shares become ex-dividend with respect such Fund dividend.

As noted in the Prospectus, a shareholder’s basis in Fund shares that he or she acquired or acquires after December 31, 2011 (“Covered Shares”), will be determined in accordance with the Fund’s default method, which is average basis, unless the shareholder affirmatively elects in writing (which may be electronic) to use a different acceptable basis determination method, such as a specific identification method. The basis determination method the Fund shareholder elects (or the default method) may not be changed with respect to a redemption (including a redemption that is part of an exchange) of Covered Shares after the settlement date of the redemption.

In addition to the requirement to report the gross proceeds from redemptions of shares, the Fund (or its administrative agent) must report to the Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) and furnish to its shareholders the basis information for Covered Shares and indicate whether they had a short-term (one year or less) or long-term (more than one year) holding period. Fund shareholders should consult with their tax advisers to determine the best IRS-accepted basis determination method for their tax situation and to obtain more information about how the basis reporting law applies to them.

## **INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM**

Deloitte & Touche LLP serves as the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, whose services include an audit of the Fund's financial statements and the performance of other related audit and tax services.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The audited financial statements for the Fund are incorporated herein by reference to Item 7 of the Funds' [Form N-CSR](#) for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025. A copy of the Annual and Semi-Annual Reports, and financial statements and accompanying notes, may be obtained without charge by calling the Fund at (800) 423-6369 or by visiting [www.aquinasfunds.com](http://www.aquinasfunds.com).



**APPENDIX A**  
**DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES RATINGS**  
**RATINGS DEFINITIONS**

**S&P Global Ratings' Issue Credit Rating Definitions**

An S&P Global Ratings issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific financial obligation, a specific class of financial obligations, or a specific financial program (including ratings on medium-term note programs and commercial paper programs). It takes into consideration the creditworthiness of guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation and takes into account the currency in which the obligation is denominated. The opinion reflects S&P Global Ratings' view of the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due, and this opinion may assess terms, such as collateral security and subordination, which could affect ultimate payment in the event of default.

Issue credit ratings can be either long-term or short-term. Short-term issue credit ratings are generally assigned to those obligations considered short-term in the relevant market, typically with an original maturity of no more than 365 days. Short-term issue credit ratings are also used to indicate the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to put features on long-term obligations. S&P Global would typically assign a long-term issue credit rating to an obligation with an original maturity of greater than 365 days. However, the ratings assigned to certain instruments may diverge from these guidelines based on market practices.

**Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings**

**A-1**

A short-term obligation rated 'A-1' is rated in the highest category by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on these obligations is extremely strong.

**A-2**

A short-term obligation rated 'A-2' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is satisfactory.

**A-3**

A short-term obligation rated 'A-3' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken an obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**B**

A short-term obligation rated 'B' is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.

**C**

A short-term obligation rated 'C' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

**D**

A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on an obligation is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed debt restructuring.

**SPUR (S&P Underlying Rating)**

A SPUR is an opinion about the stand-alone capacity of an obligor to pay debt service on a credit-enhanced debt issue, without giving effect to the enhancement that applies to it. These ratings are published only at the request of the debt issuer or obligor with the designation SPUR to distinguish them from the credit-enhanced rating that applies to the debt issue. S&P Global Ratings maintains surveillance of an issue with a published SPUR.

## Dual Ratings

Dual ratings may be assigned to debt issues that have a put option or demand feature. The first component of the rating addresses the likelihood of repayment of principal and interest as due, and the second component of the rating addresses only the demand feature. The first component of the rating can relate to either a short-term or long-term transaction and accordingly use either short-term or long-term rating symbols. The second component of the rating relates to the put option and is assigned a short-term rating symbol (for example, 'AAA/A-1+' or 'A-1+/A-1'). With U.S. municipal short-term demand debt, the U.S. municipal short-term note rating symbols are used for the first component of the rating (for example, 'SP-1+/A-1+').

## S&P Global Ratings Disclaimers

The analyses, including ratings, of S&P Global Ratings and its affiliates (together, S&P Global Ratings) are statements of opinion as of the date they are expressed and not statements of fact or recommendations to purchase, hold, or sell any securities or make any investment decisions. S&P Global Ratings assumes no obligation to update any information following publication. Users of ratings or other analyses should not rely on them in making any investment decision. S&P Global Ratings' opinions and analyses do not address the suitability of any security. S&P Global Ratings does not act as a fiduciary or an investment advisor except where registered as such. While S&P Global Ratings has obtained information from sources it believes to be reliable, it does not perform an audit and undertakes no duty of due diligence or independent verification of any information it receives. Ratings and other opinions may be changed, suspended, or withdrawn at any time.

## Qualifiers

S&P Global Ratings assigns qualifiers to ratings when appropriate. This section details active and inactive qualifiers.

### Active Qualifiers

S&P Global Ratings uses the following qualifiers that limit the scope of a rating. The structure of the transaction can require the use of a qualifier such as a 'p' qualifier, which indicates the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only. A qualifier appears as a suffix and is part of the rating.

#### 1. Federal Deposit Insurance Limit: "L" qualifier

Ratings qualified with 'L' apply only to amounts invested up to federal deposit insurance limits.

#### 2. Principal: "p" qualifier

This suffix is used for issues in which the credit factors, the terms, or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of principal are different from the credit factors, terms, or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of interest on the obligation. The 'p' suffix indicates that the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only and that the interest is not rated.

#### 3. Preliminary Ratings: "prelim" qualifier

Preliminary ratings, with the 'prelim' suffix, may be assigned to obligors or obligations, including financial programs, in the circumstances described below. Assignment of a final rating is conditional on the receipt by S&P Global Ratings of appropriate documentation. S&P Global Ratings reserves the right not to issue a final rating. Moreover, if a final rating is issued, it may differ from the preliminary rating.

- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations, most commonly structured and project finance issues, pending receipt of final documentation and legal opinions.
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations that will likely be issued upon the obligor's emergence from bankruptcy or similar reorganization, based on late-stage reorganization plans, documentation, and discussions with the obligor. Preliminary ratings may also be assigned to the obligors. These ratings consider the anticipated general credit quality of the reorganized or post-bankruptcy issuer as well as attributes of the anticipated obligation(s).
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to entities that are being formed or that are in the process of being independently established when, in S&P Global Ratings' opinion, documentation is close to final. Preliminary ratings may also be assigned to the obligations of these entities.
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned when a previously unrated entity is undergoing a well-formulated restructuring, recapitalization, significant financing, or other transformative event, generally at the point that investor or lender commitments are invited. The preliminary rating may be assigned to the entity and to its proposed obligation(s). These preliminary ratings consider the anticipated general credit quality of the obligor, as well as attributes of the anticipated obligation(s), assuming successful completion of the transformative event. Should the transformative event not occur, S&P Global Ratings would likely withdraw these preliminary ratings.
- A preliminary recovery rating may be assigned to an obligation that has a preliminary issue credit rating.

#### **4. Termination Structures: “t” qualifier**

This symbol indicates termination structures that are designed to honor their contracts to full maturity or, should certain events occur, to terminate and cash settle all their contracts before their final maturity date.

#### **5. Counterparty Instrument Rating: “cir” qualifier**

This symbol indicates a counterparty instrument rating (CIR), which is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an issuer in a securitization structure with respect to a specific financial obligation to a counterparty (including interest rate swaps, currency swaps, and liquidity facilities). The CIR is determined on an ultimate payment basis; these opinions do not take into account timeliness of payment.

#### **Inactive Qualifiers**

Inactive qualifiers are no longer applied or outstanding.

##### **1. Contingent upon final documentation: “\*” inactive qualifier**

This symbol indicated that the rating was contingent upon S&P Global Ratings’ receipt of an executed copy of the escrow agreement or closing documentation confirming investments and cash flows. Discontinued use in August 1998.

##### **2. Termination of obligation to tender: “c” inactive qualifier**

This qualifier was used to provide additional information to investors that the bank may terminate its obligation to purchase tendered bonds if the long-term credit rating of the issuer was lowered to below an investment-grade level and/or the issuer’s bonds were deemed taxable. Discontinued use in January 2001.

##### **3. U.S. direct government securities: “G” inactive qualifier**

The letter ‘G’ followed the rating symbol when a fund’s portfolio consisted primarily of direct U.S. government securities.

##### **4. Interest Payment: ‘i’ inactive qualifier**

This suffix was used for issues in which the credit factors, terms, or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of interest are different from the credit factors, terms, or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of principal on the obligation. The ‘i’ suffix indicated that the rating addressed the interest portion of the obligation only. The ‘i’ suffix was always used in conjunction with the ‘p’ suffix, which addresses likelihood of receipt of principal. For example, a rated obligation could have been assigned a rating of ‘AAApNRi’ indicating that the principal portion was rated ‘AAA’ and the interest portion of the obligation was not rated.

##### **5. Public Information Ratings: ‘pi’ qualifier**

This qualifier was used to indicate ratings that were based on an analysis of an issuer’s published financial information, as well as additional information in the public domain. Such ratings did not, however, reflect in-depth meetings with an issuer’s management and therefore could have been based on less comprehensive information than ratings without a ‘pi’ suffix. Discontinued use as of December 2014 and as of August 2015 for Lloyd’s Syndicate Assessments.

##### **6. Provisional Ratings: “pr” inactive qualifier**

The letters ‘pr’ indicate that the rating was provisional. A provisional rating assumed the successful completion of a project financed by the debt being rated and indicates that payment of debt service requirements was largely or entirely dependent upon the successful, timely completion of the project. This rating, however, while addressing credit quality subsequent to completion of the project, made no comment on the likelihood of or the risk of default upon failure of such completion.

##### **7. Quantitative Analysis of public information: “q” inactive qualifier**

A ‘q’ subscript indicates that the rating is based solely on quantitative analysis of publicly available information. Discontinued use in April 2001.

##### **8. Extraordinary risks: “r” inactive qualifier**

The ‘r’ modifier was assigned to securities containing extraordinary risks, particularly market risks, that are not covered in the credit rating. The absence of an ‘r’ modifier should not be taken as an indication that an obligation would not exhibit extraordinary noncredit-related risks. S&P Global Ratings discontinued the use of the ‘r’ modifier for most obligations in June 2000 and for the balance of obligations (mainly structured finance transactions) in November 2002.

## **Active Identifiers**

S&P Global Ratings currently uses seven other identifiers. These words or symbols provide additional information but do not change the definition of a rating or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness. The identifiers are often required by regulation.

### **1. Unsolicited: 'unsolicited' and 'u' identifier**

The 'u' identifier and 'unsolicited' designation are assigned to credit ratings initiated by parties other than the issuer or its agents, including those initiated by S&P Global Ratings.

### **2. Structured finance: "sf" identifier**

The 'sf' identifier shall be assigned to ratings on "securitization instruments" when required to comply with an applicable law or regulatory requirement or when S&P Global Ratings believes it appropriate. The addition of the 'sf' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's creditworthiness. For detailed information on the instruments assigned the 'sf' identifier, please see the appendix for the types of instruments that carry the 'sf identifier'.

### **3. Japan: 'JR' identifier**

The 'JR' identifier is assigned to all issue and issuer ratings assigned by either S&P Global Ratings Japan or S&P Global SF Japan, each of which is a registered credit rating agency in Japan, as ratings registered under Japanese regulation. The addition of the identifier does not change the definition of that rating or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

### **4. European Union: 'EU' identifier**

S&P Global Ratings applies the 'EU' identifier to global scale ratings assigned by S&P Global Ratings Europe (SPGRE) (including through its branches), which is registered with the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) and subject to EU regulation on credit rating agencies. The addition of the 'EU' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

### **5. European Endorsed: 'EE' identifier**

S&P Global Ratings applies the 'EE' identifier to global scale ratings assigned by S&P Global Ratings affiliates established outside the European Union and endorsed by SPGRE. SPGRE is registered with ESMA and subject to EU regulation on credit rating agencies. The addition of the 'EE' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

### **6. United Kingdom: 'UK' identifier**

S&P Global Ratings applies the 'UK' identifier to global scale ratings assigned by S&P Global Ratings UK (SPGRUK) which is registered with the UK Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and subject to UK regulation on credit rating agencies. The addition of the 'UK' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

### **7. United Kingdom Endorsed: 'UKE' identifier**

S&P Global Ratings applies the 'UKE' identifier to global scale ratings assigned by S&P Global Ratings' affiliates established outside the U.K. and endorsed by SPGRUK. SPGRUK is registered with the FCA and subject to UK regulation on credit rating agencies. The addition of the 'UKE' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

### **8. S&P Global SF Japan: 'XN' identifier**

S&P Global SF Japan assigns the 'XN' identifier to credit ratings assigned by S&P Global SF Japan. S&P Global SF Japan is not a Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organization. The addition of the 'XN' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

## 9. Under criteria observation ‘UCO’ identifier

The ‘UCO’ identifier may (or shall, if an EU regulatory requirement) be assigned to credit ratings under review as a result of a criteria revision. The addition of the ‘UCO’ identifier to a rating does not change that rating’s definition or our opinion about the issue’s or issuer’s creditworthiness.

### Local Currency and Foreign Currency Ratings

S&P Global Ratings’ issuer credit ratings make a distinction between foreign currency ratings and local currency ratings. A foreign currency rating on an issuer can differ from the local currency rating on it when the obligor has a different capacity to meet its obligations denominated in its local currency, versus obligations denominated in a foreign currency.

### Moody’s Credit Rating Definitions

Ratings assigned on Moody’s global long-term and short-term rating scales are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations issued by non-financial corporates, financial institutions, structured finance vehicles, project finance vehicles, and public sector entities. Moody’s defines credit risk as the risk that an entity may not meet its contractual financial obligations as they come due and any estimated financial loss in the event of default or impairment. The contractual financial obligations<sup>1</sup> addressed by Moody’s ratings are those that call for, without regard to enforceability, the payment of an ascertainable amount, which may vary based upon standard sources of variation (e.g., floating interest rates), by an ascertainable date. Moody’s rating addresses the issuer’s ability to obtain cash sufficient to service the obligation, and its willingness to pay.<sup>2</sup> Moody’s ratings do not address non-standard sources of variation in the amount of the principal obligation (e.g., equity indexed), absent an express statement to the contrary in a press release accompanying an initial rating.<sup>3</sup> Long-term ratings are assigned to issuers or obligations with an original maturity of eleven months or more and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment. Short-term ratings are assigned to obligations with an original maturity of thirteen months or less and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment.<sup>4,5,6</sup> Moody’s issues ratings at the issuer level and instrument level on both the long-term scale and the short-term scale. Typically, ratings are made publicly available although private and unpublished ratings may also be assigned.<sup>7</sup>

Moody’s differentiates structured finance ratings from fundamental ratings (i.e., ratings on nonfinancial corporate, financial institution, and public sector entities) on the global long-term scale by adding (sf) to all structured finance ratings.<sup>2</sup> The addition of (sf) to structured finance ratings should eliminate any presumption that such ratings and fundamental ratings at the same letter grade level will behave the same. The (sf) indicator for structured finance security ratings indicates that otherwise similarly rated structured finance and fundamental securities may have different risk characteristics. Through its current methodologies, however, Moody’s aspires to achieve broad expected equivalence in structured finance and fundamental rating performance when measured over a long period of time.

1. In the case of impairments, there can be a financial loss even when contractual obligations are met. See the definition of Impairment in this publication.
2. For issuer level ratings, see the definition of Issuer Ratings in this publication. In some cases the relevant credit risk relates to a third party, in addition to, or instead of the issuer. Examples include credit-linked notes and guaranteed obligations.
3. Because the number of possible features or structures is limited only by the creativity of issuers, Moody’s cannot comprehensively catalogue all the types of non-standard variation affecting financial obligations, but examples include equity indexed principal values and cash flows, prepayment penalties, and an obligation to pay an amount that is not ascertainable at the inception of the transaction.
4. For certain preferred stock and hybrid securities in which payment default events are either not defined or do not match investors’ expectations for timely payment, long-term and short-term ratings reflect the likelihood of impairment (as defined below in this publication) and financial loss in the event of impairment.
5. Debts held on the balance sheets of official sector institutions – which include supranational institutions, central banks and certain government-owned or controlled banks – may not always be treated the same as debts held by private investors and lenders. When it is known that an obligation is held by official sector institutions as well as other investors, a rating (short-term or long-term) assigned to that obligation reflects only the credit risks faced by non-official sector investors.
6. Where grace periods are disproportionately long relative to the stated maturity, Moody’s may choose not to rate the instrument. This is particularly relevant in the commercial paper market where maturities may be 30 days or less with a strong investor expectation of prompt payment.
7. For information on how to obtain a Moody’s credit rating, including private and unpublished credit ratings, please see Moody’s Investors Service Products. Please note that Moody’s always reserves the right to choose not to assign or maintain a credit rating for its own business reasons.

8. Like other global scale ratings, (sf) ratings reflect both the likelihood of a default and the expected loss suffered in the event of default. Ratings are assigned based on a rating committee's assessment of a security's expected loss rate (default probability multiplied by expected loss severity), and may be subject to the constraint that the final expected loss rating assigned would not be more than a certain number of notches, typically three to five notches, above the rating that would be assigned based on an assessment of default probability alone. The magnitude of this constraint may vary with the level of the rating, the seasoning of the transaction, and the uncertainty around the assessments of expected loss and probability of default.

### **Rating Symbols**

Gradations of creditworthiness are indicated by rating symbols, with each symbol representing a group in which the credit characteristics are broadly the same. There are nine symbols as shown below, from that used to designate least credit risk to that denoting greatest credit risk:

#### **Aaa**

Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, subject to the lowest level of credit risk.

#### **Aa**

Obligations rated Aa are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

#### **A**

Obligations rated A are judged to be upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

#### **Baa**

Obligations rated Baa are judged to be medium-grade and subject to moderate credit risk and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

#### **Ba**

Obligations rated Ba are judged to be speculative and are subject to substantial credit risk.

#### **B**

Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

#### **Caa**

Obligations rated Caa are judged to be speculative of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

#### **Ca**

Obligations rated Ca are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

#### **C**

Obligations rated C are the lowest rated and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

Note: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category. Additionally, a "(hyb)" indicator is appended to all ratings of hybrid securities issued by banks, insurers, finance companies, and securities firms.\*

Note: For more information on long-term ratings assigned to obligations in default, please see the definition "Long-Term Credit Ratings for Defaulted or Impaired Securities" in the Other Definitions section of this publication.

\* By their terms, hybrid securities allow for the omission of scheduled dividends, interest, or principal payments, which can potentially result in impairment if such an omission occurs. Hybrid securities may also be subject to contractually allowable write-downs of principal that could result in impairment. Together with the hybrid indicator, the long-term obligation rating assigned to a hybrid security is an expression of the relative credit risk associated with that security.

## **Short-Term Obligation Ratings**

Moody's assigns ratings to long-term and short-term financial obligations. Long-term ratings are assigned to issuers or obligations with an original maturity of eleven months or more and reflect both on the likelihood of a default on contractually promised payments and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default. Short-term ratings are assigned to obligations with an original maturity of thirteen months or less and reflect both on the likelihood of a default on contractually promised payments and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default.

Moody's employs the following designations to indicate the relative repayment ability of rated issuers:

### **P-1**

Ratings of Prime-1 reflect a superior ability to repay short-term obligations.

### **P-2**

Ratings of Prime-2 reflect a strong ability to repay short-term obligations.

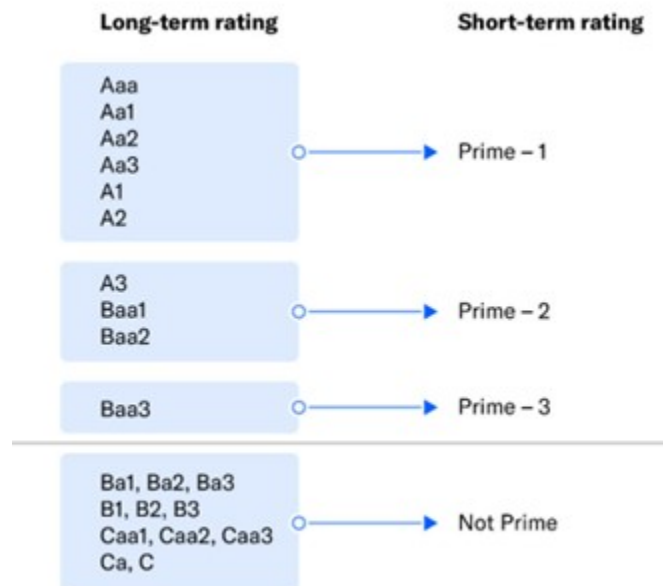
### **P-3**

Ratings of Prime-3 reflect an acceptable ability to repay short-term obligations.

### **NP**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Not Prime do not fall within any of the Prime rating categories. The following table indicates the long-term ratings consistent with different short-term ratings when such long-term ratings exist.

#### SHORT-TERM VS. LONG-TERM RATINGS



## **Fitch's National Credit Ratings**

National ratings express creditworthiness across the full range of the credit rating scale, using similar symbols to those used for international ratings. However, to assure differentiation between the two scales, a two- or three-letter suffix is appended to the national rating to reflect the specific nature of the national scale to the country concerned. For ease of reference, Fitch uses the suffix of (xxx) to indicate a national rating. Each country or monetary union's national rating scale is specific to that jurisdiction and is not comparable to national scales of different countries.

A "+" or "-" may be appended to a National Rating to denote relative status within a major rating category. Such suffixes are not added to the 'AAA(xxx)' National Rating category, to categories below 'CCC(xxx)', or to Short-Term National Ratings other than 'F1(xxx)'.

### **National Relativity**

National ratings are a measure of relative credit risk among issuers in a country or monetary union, except in circumstances when ratings are notched for support or at the instrument level to differentiate priority/recovery prospects relative to other local market instruments. Where national ratings are derived by notching, they reflect creditworthiness relative to the respective supporting entity's (parent or government) national rating, rather than to unsupported national ratings. National Rating Correspondence Tables often will have a notch-specific local currency ("LC") issuer default rating ("IDR") or credit opinion that relate to multiple rating options on the national scale.

### **LC and FC Issuer National Ratings**

National ratings can be assigned to the issuer or at the specific debt instrument level. Issuer-level national ratings address the relative vulnerability to default of LC obligations (or legal tender) for local issuers within the country concerned when not notched for support. Therefore, national ratings exclude the risk that cross border investors may be unable to repatriate interest and principal repayments out of the country. Issuer-level national ratings do not incorporate transfer and convertibility risk associated with the FC obligations of a local issuer, and this is the reason the national scale rating analysis begins with an international LC rating or LC credit opinion as transfer and convertibility risk is only incorporated into FC ratings; there are some exceptions where ratings may be notched.

### **Issuer and Instrument-level National Ratings**

Fitch assigns national ratings to specific debt instruments denominated in LC and issued where the entity or issuer is domiciled. Fitch may also assign national instrument ratings to i) foreign issuers' obligations issued in LC in the country concerned, and ii) local or foreign issuers' (legal entities or branches) obligations where repayment is in FC and a national scale rating may be required to comply with local regulation and/or local market practices often found in Central America and countries with high levels of dollarization; national ratings of FC instruments are less common.

### **Convergence at 'C'**

A 'C' level rating on both the international and national rating scales reflects that the default of an issuer is imminent. As a result, a 'C' rating on one scale is necessarily a 'C' rating on the other scale. Due to the greater differentiation across national rating scales relative to the international rating scale, there can be more rating volatility and more significant rating transition for National Ratings compared with International Ratings.

### **National Short-Term Credit Ratings**

#### **F1(xxx)**

Indicates the strongest capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Under the agency's National Rating scale, this rating is assigned to the lowest default risk relative to others in the same country or monetary union. Where the liquidity profile is particularly strong, a "+" is added to the assigned rating.

#### **F2(xxx)**

Indicates a good capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union. However, the margin of safety is not as great as in the case of the higher ratings.

#### **F3(xxx)**

Indicates an adequate capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **B(xxx)**

Indicates an uncertain capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **C(xxx)**

Indicates a highly uncertain capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **RD(xxx): Restricted default**

Indicates an entity that has defaulted on one or more of its financial commitments, although it continues to meet other financial obligations. Applicable to entity ratings only.



## **D(xxx)**

Indicates a broad-based default event for an entity, or the default of a short-term obligation.

### **Notes:**

The ISO country code suffix is placed in parentheses immediately following the rating letters to indicate the identity of the National market within which the rating applies. For illustrative purposes, (xxx) has been used.

## **LONG-TERM RATINGS**

### **S&P Global Ratings' Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings**

Issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on S&P Global Ratings' analysis of the following considerations:

- The likelihood of payment—the capacity and willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on an obligation in accordance with the terms of the obligation;
- The nature and provisions of the financial obligation, and the promise we impute; and
- The protection afforded by, and relative position of, the financial obligation in the event of a bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under the laws of bankruptcy and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

An issue rating is an assessment of default risk but may incorporate an assessment of relative seniority or ultimate recovery in the event of default. Junior obligations are typically rated lower than senior obligations, to reflect lower priority in bankruptcy, as noted above. (Such differentiation may apply when an entity has both senior and subordinated obligations, secured and unsecured obligations, or operating company and holding company obligations.)

### **Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings\***

#### **AAA**

An obligation rated 'AAA' has the highest rating assigned by S&P Global Ratings. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is extremely strong.

#### **AA**

An obligation rated 'AA' differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is very strong.

#### **A**

An obligation rated 'A' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is still strong.

#### **BBB**

An obligation rated 'BBB' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to weaken the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

#### **BB; B; CCC; CC; and C**

Obligations rated 'BB', 'B', 'CCC', 'CC', and 'C' are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. 'BB' indicates the least degree of speculation and 'C' the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions.

#### **BB**

An obligation rated 'BB' is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

#### **B**

An obligation rated 'B' is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated 'BB', but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

## CCC

An obligation rated ‘CCC’ is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.

## CC

An obligation rated ‘CC’ is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment. The ‘CC’ rating is used when a default has not yet occurred but S&P Global Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.

## C

An obligation rated ‘C’ is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared with obligations that are rated higher.

## D

An obligation rated ‘D’ is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the ‘D’ rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless S&P Global Ratings believes that such payments will be made within the next five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or the next 30 calendar days. The ‘D’ rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. A rating on an obligation is lowered to ‘D’ if it is subject to a distressed debt restructuring.

\* Ratings from ‘AA’ to ‘CCC’ may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the rating categories.

### **Moody’s Long-Term Obligation Ratings**

#### **Long-Term Obligation Ratings**

Ratings assigned on Moody’s global long-term and short-term rating scales are forward-looking opinions of the relative credit risks of financial obligations issued by non-financial corporates, financial institutions, structured finance vehicles, project finance vehicles, and public sector entities. Moody’s defines credit risk as the risk that an entity may not meet its contractual financial obligations as they come due and any estimated financial loss in the event of default or impairment. The contractual financial obligations<sup>1</sup> addressed by Moody’s ratings are those that call for, without regard to enforceability, the payment of an ascertainable amount, which may vary based upon standard sources of variation (e.g., floating interest rates), by an ascertainable date. Moody’s rating addresses the issuer’s ability to obtain cash sufficient to service the obligation, and its willingness to pay.<sup>2</sup> Moody’s ratings do not address non-standard sources of variation in the amount of the principal obligation (e.g., equity indexed), absent an express statement to the contrary in a press release accompanying an initial rating.<sup>3</sup> Long-term ratings are assigned to issuers or obligations with an original maturity of eleven months or more and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment. Short-term ratings are assigned to obligations with an original maturity of thirteen months or less and reflect both on the likelihood of a default or impairment on contractual financial obligations and the expected financial loss suffered in the event of default or impairment.<sup>4, 5, 6</sup> Moody’s issues ratings at the issuer level and instrument level on both the long-term scale and the short-term scale. Typically, ratings are made publicly available although private and unpublished ratings may also be assigned.<sup>7</sup>

Moody’s differentiates structured finance ratings from fundamental ratings (i.e., ratings on nonfinancial corporate, financial institution, and public sector entities) on the global long-term scale by adding (sf) to all structured finance ratings.<sup>7</sup> The addition of (sf) to structured finance ratings should eliminate any presumption that such ratings and fundamental ratings at the same letter grade level will behave the same. The (sf) indicator for structured finance security ratings indicates that otherwise similarly rated structured finance and fundamental securities may have different risk characteristics. Through its current methodologies, however, Moody’s aspires to achieve broad expected equivalence in structured finance and fundamental rating performance when measured over a long period of time.

1. In the case of impairments, there can be a financial loss even when contractual obligations are met. See the definition of Impairment in this publication.

2. For issuer level ratings, see the definition of Issuer Ratings in this publication. In some cases the relevant credit risk relates to a third party, in addition to, or instead of the issuer. Examples include credit-linked notes and guaranteed obligations.

3. Because the number of possible features or structures is limited only by the creativity of issuers, Moody’s cannot comprehensively catalogue all the types of non-standard variation affecting financial obligations, but examples include equity indexed principal values and cash flows, prepayment penalties, and an obligation to pay an amount that is not ascertainable at the inception of the transaction.

4. For certain preferred stock and hybrid securities in which payment default events are either not defined or do not match investors' expectations for timely payment, long-term and short-term ratings reflect the likelihood of impairment (as defined below in this publication) and financial loss in the event of impairment.

5. Debts held on the balance sheets of official sector institutions – which include supranational institutions, central banks and certain government-owned or controlled banks – may not always be treated the same as debts held by private investors and lenders. When it is known that an obligation is held by official sector institutions as well as other investors, a rating (short-term or long-term) assigned to that obligation reflects only the credit risks faced by non-official sector investors.

6. Where grace periods are disproportionately long relative to the stated maturity, Moody's may choose not to rate the instrument. This is particularly relevant in the commercial paper market where maturities may be 30 days or less with a strong investor expectation of prompt payment.

7. For information on how to obtain a Moody's credit rating, including private and unpublished credit ratings, please see Moody's Investors Service Products. Please note that Moody's always reserves the right to choose not to assign or maintain a credit rating for its own business reasons.

8. Like other global scale ratings, (sf) ratings reflect both the likelihood of a default and the expected loss suffered in the event of default. Ratings are assigned based on a rating committee's assessment of a security's expected loss rate (default probability multiplied by expected loss severity), and may be subject to the constraint that the final expected loss rating assigned would not be more than a certain number of notches, typically three to five notches, above the rating that would be assigned based on an assessment of default probability alone. The magnitude of this constraint may vary with the level of the rating, the seasoning of the transaction, and the uncertainty around the assessments of expected loss and probability of default.

### **Moody's Long-Term Rating Definitions:**

#### **Aaa**

Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, subject to the lowest level of credit risk.

#### **Aa**

Obligations rated Aa are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

#### **A**

Obligations rated A are judged to be upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

#### **Baa**

Obligations rated Baa are judged to be medium-grade and subject to moderate credit risk and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

#### **Ba**

Obligations rated Ba are judged to be speculative and are subject to substantial credit risk.

#### **B**

Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

#### **Caa**

Obligations rated Caa are judged to be speculative of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

#### **Ca**

Obligations rated Ca are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

#### **C**

Obligations rated C are the lowest rated and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

Note: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the

modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category. Additionally, a “(hyb)” indicator is appended to all ratings of hybrid securities issued by banks, insurers, finance companies, and securities firms.\*

Note: For more information on long-term ratings assigned to obligations in default, please see the definition “Long-Term Credit Ratings for Defaulted or Impaired Securities” in the Other Definitions section of this publication.

\* By their terms, hybrid securities allow for the omission of scheduled dividends, interest, or principal payments, which can potentially result in impairment if such an omission occurs. Hybrid securities may also be subject to contractually allowable write-downs of principal that could result in impairment. Together with the hybrid indicator, the long-term obligation rating assigned to a hybrid security is an expression of the relative credit risk associated with that security.

### **Fitch’s National Long-Term Credit Ratings**

#### **AAA(xxx)**

‘AAA’ National Ratings denote the highest rating assigned by the agency in its National Rating scale for that country. This rating is assigned to issuers or obligations with the lowest expectation of default risk relative to all other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **AA(xxx)**

‘AA’ National Ratings denote expectations of a very low level of default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union. The default risk inherent differs only slightly from that of the country’s highest rated issuers or obligations.

#### **A(xxx)**

‘A’ National Ratings denote expectations of a low level of default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **BBB(xxx)**

‘BBB’ National Ratings denote a moderate level of default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **BB(xxx)**

‘BB’ National Ratings denote an elevated default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **B(xxx)**

‘B’ National Ratings denote a significantly elevated level of default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **CCC(xxx)**

‘CCC’ National Ratings denote a very high level of default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **CC(xxx)**

‘CC’ National Ratings denote the level of default risk is among the highest relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country or monetary union.

#### **C(xxx)**

A default or default-like process has begun, or the issuer is in standstill, or for a closed funding vehicle, payment capacity is irrevocably impaired. Conditions that are indicative of a ‘C’ category rating for an issuer include:

- The issuer has entered into a grace or cure period following non-payment of a material financial obligation;
- The formal announcement by the issuer or their agent of a distressed debt exchange; and
- A closed financing vehicle where payment capacity is irrevocably impaired such that it is not expected to pay interest and/or principal in full during the life of the transaction, but where no payment default is imminent.

**RD(xxx): Restricted default.**

'RD' ratings indicate an issuer that, in Fitch's opinion, has experienced an uncured payment default on a bond, loan or other material financial obligation but that has not entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure and has not otherwise ceased business. This would include:

- The selective payment default on a specific class or currency of debt; or
- The uncured expiry of any applicable grace period, cure period or default forbearance period following a payment default on a bank loan, capital markets security or other material financial obligation.

**D(xxx)**

'D' National Ratings denote an issuer that has entered into bankruptcy filings, administration, receivership, liquidation or other formal winding-up procedure or that has otherwise ceased business.

**Notes:**

The ISO country code suffix is placed in parentheses immediately following the rating letters to indicate the identity of the National market within which the rating applies. For illustrative purposes, (xxx) has been used.

**MUNICIPAL NOTE RATINGS****S&P's Municipal Short-Term Note Ratings Definitions**

An S&P Global Ratings U.S. municipal note rating reflects S&P Global Ratings' opinion about the liquidity factors and market access risks unique to the notes. Notes due in three years or less will likely receive a note rating. Notes with an original maturity of more than three years will most likely receive a long-term debt rating. In determining which type of rating, if any, to assign, S&P Global Ratings' analysis will review the following considerations:

- Amortization schedule—the larger the final maturity relative to other maturities, the more likely it will be treated as a note; and
- Source of payment—the more dependent the issue is on the market for its refinancing, the more likely it will be treated as a note.

**SP-1**

Strong capacity to pay principal and interest. An issue determined to possess a very strong capacity to pay debt service is given a plus (+) designation.

**SP-2**

Satisfactory capacity to pay principal and interest, with some vulnerability to adverse financial and economic changes over the term of the notes.

**SP-3**

Speculative capacity to pay principal and interest.

**D**

'D' is assigned upon failure to pay the note when due, completion of a distressed debt restructuring, or the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions.

**Moody's US Municipal Short-Term Debt and Demand Obligation Ratings****Short-Term Obligation Ratings**

Moody's uses the global short-term 'Prime' rating scale for commercial paper issued by US municipalities and nonprofits. These commercial paper programs may be backed by external letters of credit or liquidity facilities, or by an issuer's self-liquidity. For other short-term municipal obligations, Moody's uses one of two other short-term rating scales, the Municipal Investment Grade (MIG) and Variable Municipal Investment Grade (VMIG) scales discussed below.

Moody's uses the MIG scale for US municipal cash flow notes, bond anticipation notes and certain other short-term obligations, which typically mature in three years or less.

### **MIG 1**

This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by established cash flows, highly reliable liquidity support, or demonstrated broad-based access to the market for refinancing.

### **MIG 2**

This designation denotes strong credit quality. Margins of protection are ample, although not as large as in the preceding group.

### **MIG 3**

This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Liquidity and cash-flow protection may be narrow, and market access for refinancing is likely to be less well-established.

### **SG**

This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Debt instruments in this category may lack sufficient margins of protection.

### **VMIG Ratings**

For variable rate demand obligations (VRDOs), Moody's assigns both a long-term rating and a short-term payment obligation rating. The long-term rating addresses the issuer's ability to meet scheduled principal and interest payments. The short-term payment obligation rating addresses the ability of the issuer or the liquidity provider to meet any purchase price payment obligation resulting from optional tenders ("on demand") and/or mandatory tenders of the VRDO. The short-term payment obligation rating uses the VMIG scale. Transitions of VMIG ratings with conditional liquidity support differ from transitions of Prime ratings reflecting the risk that external liquidity support will terminate if the issuer's long-term rating drops below investment grade. Please see our methodology that discusses obligations with conditional liquidity support. For VRDOs, we typically assign a VMIG rating if the frequency of the payment obligation is less than every three years. If the frequency of the payment obligation is less than three years, but the obligation is payable only with remarketing proceeds, the VMIG short-term rating is not assigned and it is denoted as "NR". Industrial development bonds in the US where the obligor is a corporate may carry a VMIG rating that reflects Moody's view of the relative likelihood of default and loss. In these cases, liquidity assessment is based on the liquidity of the corporate obligor.

### **VMIG 1**

This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by the superior short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

### **VMIG 2**

This designation denotes strong credit quality. Good protection is afforded by the strong short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

### **VMIG 3**

This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Adequate protection is afforded by the satisfactory short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections.

### **SG**

This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Demand features rated in this category may be supported by a liquidity provider that does not have a sufficiently strong short-term rating or may lack the structural or legal protections.

The following table indicates the municipal long-term ratings consistent with the highest potential MIG and VMIG short-term ratings.

**US MUNICIPAL SHORT-TERM VS. LONG-TERM RATINGS**

