

MetWest Strategic Income Fund

Performance as of September 30, 2019

(%)	I Share	M Share	Index ¹
Latest Quarter	1.06	0.87	1.06
Year-To-Date	5.31	5.11	3.33
1 Year	5.43	5.03	4.43
3 Years	3.48	3.17	3.57
5 Years	2.78	2.51	3.00
10 Years	6.00	5.73	2.55
Since Inception	3.63	4.16	3.41; 3.39 ²

Not annualized if less than one year.

Expense Ratio (%)	I Share	M Share
Gross	1.53	1.84

Annual fund operating expenses as stated in the Prospectus dated July 29, 2019.

Source: TCW

¹ ICE BofAML 3 Month U.S. Treasury Bill Index Plus 200 bps – An unmanaged index comprised of a single issue purchased at the beginning of the month and held for a full month. The issue selected at each month-end rebalancing is the outstanding Treasury Bill that matures closest to, but, not beyond three months from the rebalancing date. The index is not available for direct investment; therefore its performance does not reflect a reduction for fees or expenses incurred in managing a portfolio. The securities in the index may be substantially different from those in the Fund.

² The since inception return for the index reflects the inception date of the MetWest Class I and Class M Share Funds, respectively. For period 3/31/04 – 9/30/19; 6/30/03 – 9/30/19.

Market Review: “What is it that you would like me to do, sir?”

Having foreshadowed a willingness to renew monetary accommodation as early as January of this year, perhaps the Fed could be lauded for holding off action until the third quarter against the withering criticism from the President and intermittently volatile markets. But capitulate it finally did, not once but twice, with an ease of 25 basis points in September to follow one in late July, which had marked its first cut since 2008. What was notable in the redirection of policy, as highlighted by the latest meeting minutes, was a lack of consensus versus the past, underscoring uncertainty (and dispersion of opinion) among the FOMC members. The broader viewpoints suggest increased risk of policy error, particularly in the face of unrelenting political pressure. However, it wasn't as if the more dovish faction was without support for its perspective: since the start of the year, trade tension and its fallout disaffected economic measurables in a meaningful way. As a result, global recessionary concerns mounted in the third quarter, particularly in Europe where the IHS Market Eurozone composite PMI, which captures both manufacturing and services activity, fell to 50.4 in September, the lowest reading since June 2013, and German manufacturing PMI fell to a 10-year low. Trade concerns have taken a toll on U.S. manufacturing as well, with the PMI here falling into contraction territory for the first time in three years. Not surprisingly, businesses remain skeptical of the prospective environment, as evidenced by sharp declines in survey-based measures of expectations, confidence, and spending decisions.

And if the policy challenge wasn't enough, “operational” issues surfaced late in the quarter as the NY Fed was spurred to intervene in lending markets during September to address significant stress in the overnight funding markets whereby repurchase rates spiked from 2% to 10% over the course of a week. The funding squeeze hypothetically owed to technical factors (corporate tax payments and Treasury auction settlements that reduced excess bank reserves held at the Fed, and thus reduced the cash available to lending in the repo market). For now, the dislocation does not suggest a broader liquidity crisis, though it highlights the post-global financial crisis regulatory environment in which dealers have limited ability to maintain order in the repo market, and counsels ongoing vigilance to downstream effects into other bank funding markets.

Despite the continuing late-cycle conditions characterizing the U.S. and global economy, with soaring debt and slowing growth, thus far, a strong consumer and accommodative Fed have kept the expansion going and asset prices up (mostly). This is reflected in the ongoing climb of equity markets this year notwithstanding periodic sell-offs, as the S&P 500 advanced 1.7% in the third quarter to notch a year-to-date return of nearly 21%. Fixed income markets, too, have posted impressive total returns, with the Bloomberg Barclays Aggregate Index up 2.3% for the quarter and 8.5% year-to-date. Investment grade corporate credit, in particular, has benefitted from the Fed's signals/actions and a global appetite for yield fed by U.S. issuers, delivering a 3.1% gain in the quarter and 13.2% year-to-date, the best return in 10 years. High yield returned 1.3% in the third quarter; though performance bifurcation by quality continued in 2019 as the BB-rated cohort gained 2.0% while CCC-rated credits fell by nearly the same amount. Among securitized products, agency MBS realized a return of 1.4%, despite a weak August, outperforming Treasuries by a modest 6 bps on a duration-adjusted basis over the quarter. The sector has had a challenging year, as Fed balance sheet reduction, Treasury rate volatility, and changes to the TBA market have caused spreads to fluctuate. Non-agency MBS, in contrast, continued to provide steady though modest positive performance, buttressed by favorable supply/demand characteristics. In the commercial MBS (CMBS) space, non-agency CMBS led with a 2.0% return and 34 bps of excess return over duration-matched Treasuries, while higher quality agency CMBS trailed Treasuries by 6 bps. Finally, benign consumer fundamentals buoyed traditional ABS sectors, resulting in a modest positive return of 0.9% gain for the quarter.

The performance data presented represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Total returns include reinvestment of dividends and distributions. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance data presented. Performance data current to the most recent month end is available on the Fund's website at TCW.com. Investment returns and principal value will fluctuate with market conditions. The value of an investment in the Fund, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than its original purchase cost.

You should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of a mutual fund carefully before investing. A Fund's Prospectus and Summary Prospectus contain this and other information about the Fund. To receive a Prospectus, please call 800-241-4671 or you may download the Prospectus from the Fund's website at TCW.com. Please read it carefully.

Performance

The MetWest Strategic Income Fund (I-Class) gained 1.06% (net of fees) for the third quarter of 2019, performing in line with the Merrill Lynch 3-Month TBill (+200 basis points) Index. The largest single driver of performance during this period was the duration position of roughly 1.8 years, which was rewarded by a falling rate backdrop as the 10-Year bellwether yield ended 34 bps lower at 1.67% by quarter-end. Notwithstanding spread widening among energy sectors, corporate credit exposure was also additive to performance given strength among consumer non-cyclicals and communications holdings. On an absolute basis, healthcare, food and beverage, wirelines, banking and pharmaceuticals were the top contributors, while select holdings in the independent energy sector resulted in a slight drag. Outside of credit, gains came from the Fund's allocation to legacy residential non-agency MBS as the sector edged steadily higher, supported by solid demand and attractive fundamentals. Additionally, gains came from the small exposure to agency MBS, while ABS and CMBS holdings detracted modestly during the quarter.

Outlook & Positioning

Following a prolonged, albeit not especially vigorous, expansion, TCW has increasingly viewed current conditions as late-cycle in character, with a slowing pace of growth a consequence. Given the decidedly tightening posture of the Fed between late 2016 and early 2019 – nine rate hikes and significant balance sheet reduction – it's not surprising that activity would turn down somewhat, particularly with a flatter yield curve reducing the incentives for financial intermediaries to expand their lending books. Add in the uncertainty of trade policy and you have players in the real economy deferring capital investment (weakening business confidence) and production volume (falling ISM manufacturing), putting further downward pressure on potential growth. The investment management team continues to emphasize a cycle-aware philosophy to mitigate the effects of a more challenging downturn and remains positioned to expand the risk budget when long-term expected returns are more favorable.

As Treasury yields rallied during the quarter, the duration was trimmed modestly, and ended September at 1.8 years. By way of sector positioning, the Fund maintains a defensive credit stance with minimal exposure to the more vulnerable (i.e., "breakable") issuers and industries. Exposure emphasizes communications and consumer non-cyclicals such as pharmaceuticals, healthcare, or food and beverage, with an eye towards adding opportunistically across credit during bouts of volatility when prices look relatively more attractive. Outside of credit, senior parts of the structured products markets remain a haven from credit excesses while still generating incremental return, though we remain vigilant to pockets of looser underwriting standards, particularly in current vintage CMBS. Residential MBS also remains an area to pick up relatively reliable yield, particularly in the legacy non-agency MBS space, which continues to present attractive risk-adjusted return potential despite a shrinking market. Finally, the Fund focuses on super senior ABS backed by government guaranteed student loan collateral as well as AAA-rated CLOs, as well as agency-backed issues within CMBS.

This material reflects the current opinions of the author but not necessarily those of TCW and such opinions are subject to change without notice. TCW, its officers, directors, employees or clients may have positions in securities or investments mentioned in this publication, which positions may change at any time, without notice. This material may include estimates, projections and other “forward-looking” statements. Actual events may differ substantially from those presented. TCW assumes no duty to update any such statements. All projections and estimates are based on current asset prices and are subject to change.

Investment Risks: It is important to note that the Fund is not guaranteed by the U.S. Government. Fixed income investments entail interest rate risk, the risk of issuer default, issuer credit risk, and price volatility risk. Funds investing in bonds can lose their value as interest rates rise and an investor can lose principal. Mortgage-backed and other asset-backed securities often involve risks that are different from or more acute than risks associated with other types of debt instruments. MBS related to floating rate loans may exhibit greater price volatility than a fixed rate obligation of similar credit quality. With respect to non-agency MBS, there are no direct or indirect government or agency guarantees of payments in pools created by non-governmental issuers. Non-agency MBS are also not subject to the same underwriting requirements for the underlying mortgages that are applicable to those mortgage-related securities that have a government or government-sponsored entity guarantee. For a complete list of Fund risks, please see the Prospectus.

Glossary of Terms

Agency MBS – The purchase of mortgage-backed securities issued by government-sponsored enterprises such as Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. **Asset-Backed Securities** – A financial security backed by a loan, lease or receivables against assets other than real estate and mortgage-backed securities. **Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Aggregate Index** – A market capitalization-weighted index of investment-grade, fixed-rate debt issues, including government, corporate, asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities, with maturities of at least one year. **BPS (Basis Points)** – A unit that is equal to 1/100th of 1%, and is used to denote the change in a financial instrument. The basis point is commonly used for calculating changes in interest rates, equity indexes and the yield of a fixed-income security. **CLO (Collateralized Loan Obligations)** – A special purpose vehicle (SPV) with securitization payments in the form of different tranches. Financial institutions back this security with receivables from loans. **CMBS (Commercial Mortgage-Backed Securities)** – A debt obligation that represents claims to the cash flows from pools of mortgage loans on commercial property. **Corporate** – Of or relating to a bond issued by a corporation as opposed to a bond issued by the U.S. Treasury, a non-U.S. government or a municipality. **Corporate Credit** – A term that is used in written investment materials and commentaries to refer to a corporation’s debt or to the corporate debt market as a whole. **Defensive** – Stock that provides a constant dividend and stable earnings regardless of the state of the overall stock market. **Duration** – A measure of the sensitivity of the price (the value of principal) of a fixed-income investment to a change in interest rates. Duration is expressed as a number of years. Rising interest rates mean falling bond prices, while declining interest rates mean rising bond prices. **Distribution** – Distributions of income and capital gains that mutual funds make to their investors periodically during a calendar year. **Dividend** – A distribution of a portion of a company’s earnings, decided by the board of directors, to a class of its shareholders. **Dove/Dovish** – An economic policy advisor who promotes monetary policies that involve the maintenance of low interest rates, believing that inflation and its negative effects will have a minimal impact on society. Statements that suggest that inflation will have a minimal impact are called “dovish.” **Emerging Market (EM)** – A country that has some characteristics of a developed market but is not a developed market. This includes countries that may be developed markets in the future or were in the past. **Emerging Market Debt (EMD)** – A term used to encompass bonds issued by less developed countries. **Federal Reserve (the Fed)** – The central bank of the United States which regulates the U.S. monetary and financial system. **FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee)** – The branch of the Federal Reserve Board that determines the direction of monetary policy. **Fundamental** – Macroeconomics and Microeconomics. Macroeconomic fundamentals include topics that affect an economy at large. **High Yield** – A bond that is rated below investment grade. **Interest Rate** – The proportion of a loan that is charged as interest to the borrower, typically expressed as an annual percentage of the loan outstanding. **Investment Grade** – A bond that is rated Baa3/BBB- or higher by Moody’s, Standard & Poors and Fitch. **ISM (Institute For Supply Management)** – A non-profit organization that serves professionals, who are employed in the supply management profession. **Liquidity** – The ability to convert an asset to cash quickly. **Mutual Funds** – An investment vehicle that is made up of a pool of funds collected from many investors for the purpose of investing in securities such as stocks, bonds, money-market instruments and similar assets. Mutual funds are operated by money managers, who invest the fund’s capital and attempt to produce capital gains and income for the fund’s investors. A mutual fund’s portfolio is structured and maintained to match the investment objectives stated in its prospectus. **Non-Agency CMBS** – Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities whose underlying assets are commercial real estate such as multi-family, hotel, office, or retail properties and do not have an explicit US government guarantee nor are they guaranteed by one of the Government Sponsored Enterprises. **Non-Agency MBS** – Mortgage backed securities sponsored by private companies other than government sponsored enterprises such as Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. **PMI (Purchasing Managers Index)** – An indicator of the economic health of the manufacturing sector. The PMI index is based on five major indicators: new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries and the employment environment. **Repurchase Agreement (Repo)** – A form of short-term borrowing for dealers in government securities. The dealer sells the government securities to investors, usually on an overnight basis, and buys them back the following day. **Securitized Product** – Any fixed income investment from the mortgage-backed, asset-backed, or commercial mortgage-backed sectors. **Spread** – The difference between the bid and the ask price of a security or asset. **Standard & Poor’s 500 Index (S&P 500)** – An index of 505 stocks issued by 500 large companies with market capitalizations of at least \$6.1 billion. It is seen as a leading indicator of U.S. equities and a reflection of the performance of the large-cap universe. **Technicals** – Analyzing statistics generated by market

MetWest Strategic Income Fund

activity, such as past prices and volume. **Tightening** – Short for tight monetary policy. A situation in which a central bank enacts relatively high target interest rates to lower the available of credit. Effectively “tightening” the supply of credit. **To Be Announced (TBA)** – A term used to describe a forward mortgage-backed securities trade. **Treasury bill (T-Bill)** – A short-term debt obligation backed by the Treasury Dept. of the U.S. government with a maturity of less than one year, sold in denominations of \$1,000 up to a maximum purchase of \$5 million. **Underwriting** – 1. The process by which investment bankers raise investment capital from investors on behalf of corporations and governments that are issuing securities (both equity and debt). 2. The process of issuing insurance policies. **Volatility** – A measure of the risk of price moves for a security calculated from the standard deviation of day to day logarithmic historical price changes. **Yield** – The income return on an investment. This refers to the interest or dividends received from a security and is usually expressed annually as a percentage based on the investment’s cost, its current market value or its face value. **Yield Curve** – A line that plots the interest rates, at a set point in time, of bonds having equal credit quality, but differing maturity dates. The most frequently reported yield curve compares the three-month, two-year, five-year and 30-year U.S. Treasury debt. This yield curve is used as a benchmark for other debt in the market, such as mortgage rates or bank lending rates. The curve is also used to predict changes in economic output and growth.

■ For more information about the Fund call us at 800 241 4671.

■ Visit our web site for a full menu of products and services at TCW.com.