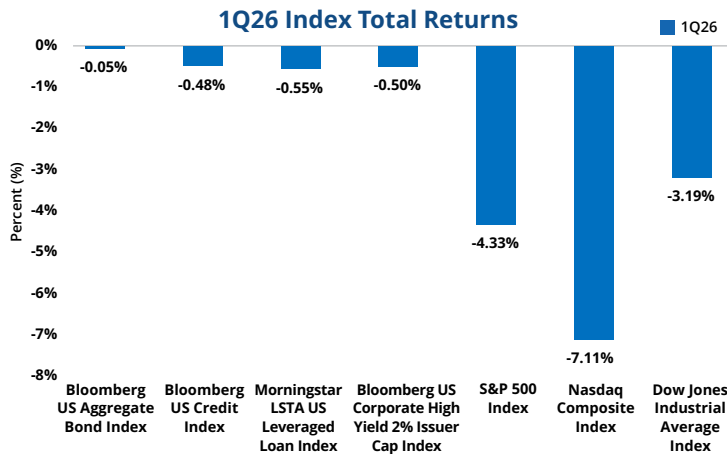




MARCH 31, 2026

Class I-2  
PLEDX

Class I  
PLEBX



Index	1Q26
Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index	-0.05%
Bloomberg US Credit Index	-0.48%
Morningstar LSTA US Leveraged Loan Index	-0.55%
Bloomberg US Corporate High Yield 2% Issuer Cap Index	-0.50%
S&P 500 Index	-4.33%
Nasdaq Composite Index	-7.11%
Dow Jones Industrial Average Index	-3.19%

Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/26.

## Market Review

U.S. equity and fixed-income markets generated largely negative total returns in the first quarter of 2026 as software-related credit concerns, rising yields, and the Iran conflict weighed on markets. Domestic equity indices were weaker, with small caps and value the exceptions, while fixed-income performance favored short maturities and higher credit quality as rates and spreads moved higher.

- Artificial intelligence (AI) developments played an outsized role in the first quarter as advancing functionality posed a potential threat to software-company business models and adjacent service industries. Leveraged loan prices in the software sector fell in January and February in the wake of the developments with the selling cascading to private credit vehicles, many of whom gated redemptions.

- The first three months of 2026 were bookended by conflict, starting with Operation Absolute Resolve in early January, which swiftly removed Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro from power. Then, in Operation Epic Fury, which began on February 28, the United States, in partnership with Israel, launched an air and naval campaign that resulted in the killing of Iran's supreme leader and senior leadership, as well as widespread damage across the region and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz to seaborne traffic.
- Energy and precious metals prices moved notably higher as the Iran conflict exposed the global economy to potentially the largest supply chain shock since COVID. Faced with heightened uncertainty, the Federal Reserve (Fed) opted to keep the fed funds rate unchanged at the March meeting as market expectations shifted from two cuts at the start of the year to zero for the balance of 2026.

Both "risk-free" and risk assets were negatively impacted due to the events mentioned above. The U.S. Treasury curve flattened as yields rose across the curve, with the two-year note rising 32 basis points and the 30-year bond nearly touching 5% at the end of March. Credit generated negative total returns, with investment-grade corporates, high yield bonds, and leveraged loans in close proximity and down roughly a half percentage point. Spreads widened with fixed-rate corporates responding to the impact of Iran, while loans were largely influenced by the selloff in software and services companies. The largest level-two GICS industry in the Morningstar LSTA Leveraged Loan Index at the start of the year, secondary loan prices in software and services fell over seven points during the quarter to end March at \$87.97. AI advancements caused a revaluation of this segment within the loan market that had previously been viewed as sturdy due to recurring revenue and high switching costs. Software stress also manifested in the private credit space, where several leading alternative asset managers had to gate non-publicly traded business development companies as redemption requests outpaced quarterly share repurchase caps. The U.S. dollar gained 1.67% during the quarter as an expected pivot in Fed easing policy and investor shift to risk-free assets

supported performance. Gold started the year on a strong footing, rising over 25% by late January, but largely gave back gains as the Iran conflict escalated and ended the quarter up 7.99%. Oil was the standout asset during the quarter, with West Texas Intermediate rising over 76% as the Strait of Hormuz closure by Iran cut the world off from 14 million barrels of oil per day and set in motion a worldwide scramble for refined products, liquid natural gas, and fertilizer.

Economic data was resilient during the first quarter, but the outlook is complicated by the knock-on effects from the Iran conflict, which will likely factor into data in the months ahead. Non-farm payrolls gained in two of the three months, with March coming in well above consensus at 178,000 new jobs, and the unemployment rate modestly declined from 4.4% to 4.3% quarter over quarter. The University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Survey, which measures confidence and future expectations, started off on a strong note but weakened in March as respondents processed the costs of the Iran conflict. One area of concern was a jump in short-term inflation expectations, which rose from 3.4% to 3.8% from February to March, although long-term expectations among respondents remained anchored at 3.2%. This aligned with the Consumer Price Index, which continued to drop from the recent high of 3.0% in September 2025 to a February reading of 2.4%. One data point that has the potential to be disinflationary is the future of tariffs, now one year on from liberation day. During the quarter, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6 to 3 against the president's use of emergency tariff powers under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, although the White House signaled that it would rely on other authorities to continue tariffs.

## Asset Class Overview

Investment-grade bonds were not immune to the risk-off environment and generated largely negative total returns during the quarter, with performance favoring short maturities and higher-rated bonds within the universe. Despite geopolitical influences, investment-grade corporate bonds remained on solid footing, supported by positive fundamentals and technicals. Strong GDP growth and earnings growth continue to support credit quality, as evidenced by upgrades outpacing downgrades by a nearly 3-to-1 ratio thus far in 2026. Investment-grade corporates had strong issuance in the first quarter at \$645 billion, representing over 20% year-over-year growth with much

of that in support of AI capital spending. But it's important to put this into context, as roughly 65% of new issuance was by companies rated A or better. Credit selection will continue to play an important role in the months ahead as animal spirits begin to pick up – the \$106 billion of new issuance in support of M&A activity during the first quarter represented the highest quarterly total since 2016. The yield-to-worst of the Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index (Agg) rose over the quarter by 25 bps to end at 4.57%, whereas spreads widened 3 bps, ending with an option-adjusted spread (OAS) of 30 bps. The total return for investment-grade bonds (represented by the Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index) in the first quarter was -0.05%, while the average price was \$93.25, down from \$94.07 at the end of December.

	1Q26 Return	OAS	OAS to Start Year	YTW	YTW to Start Year	Duration	Duration to Start Year
US Aggregate Index	-0.05%	31	27	4.57%	4.35%	5.88	6.04
AAA	0.19%	29	31	4.27%	4.05%	4.16	4.19
AA	0.10%	11	10	4.39%	4.20%	5.69	5.88
A	-0.52%	75	65	5.00%	4.72%	6.79	6.86
BBB	-0.58%	112	98	5.36%	5.06%	6.60	6.71

Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/26.

The high-yield bond market gave back some of the strong performance in 2025 as rising rates, volatile energy prices, and risk-off market sentiment were too much to overcome in the first quarter. The Bloomberg US High Yield 2% Issuer Capped Bond Index returned -0.50% during the period, as carry was unable to offset price weakness with option adjusted spreads (OAS) widening 51 bps at the onset of the Iran conflict. Despite market conditions, the asset class remained well supported by corporate fundamentals, and while default activity has ticked up since the third quarter of 2025, it remained low relative to history as many weaker borrowers have migrated to private credit lenders. According to J.P. Morgan, the 12-month par-weighted U.S. high-yield bond default rate (including distressed exchanges) ended the quarter at 2.07%, well below the 25-year monthly average of 3.25%. High yield issuance started with a bang but ended with a whimper as the Iran conflict weighed on risk appetite. A total of \$80 billion across 90 tranches came to the high-yield market, with most of it in the first half of the quarter, while volume fell in March as two M&A deals, Electronic Arts and Nexstar Media Group, made up more than half of the total that month.

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	1Q26 Return	OAS	OAS to Start Year	YTW	YTW to Start Year	Duration	Duration to Start Year
US HY 2% Issuer Cap Index	-0.50%	317	268	7.40%	6.57%	3.02	2.80
BB	-0.28%	197	166	6.21%	5.60%	3.25	3.04
B	-0.65%	345	270	7.69%	6.56%	2.78	2.53
CCC	-0.13%	725	614	11.39%	9.84%	2.56	2.47

Source: Bloomberg as of 3/31/26.

## Fund Performance

The Aristotle Core Bond Fund (Class I-2) returned -0.02% versus the Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index return of -0.05%.

## Portfolio Review

The first quarter of 2026 was dominated by geopolitical events and the spillover effects from software and leveraged finance. That said, it is important to highlight that in spite of rising interest rates and credit spreads, the specter of a supply chain shock, and war, investment-grade bonds delivered for investors by preserving capital as an anchor during rough seas. The market conditions of the quarter played to the strength of high-quality structured products, as asset-backed securities such as auto loans and credits, and mortgages generated positive total returns for investors. We cannot predict the headlines in the months ahead but volatility similar to what we experienced allows us to make the most of opportunities by focusing on fundamental, bottom-up credit selection in conjunction with active relative value sector selection.

While investment-grade corporate spreads moved higher in sympathy with the first quarter's risk-off market, the trend in recent years toward tightening has reduced the margin of error for corporate risk. We believe a falling compensation for risk warrants a continued conservative posture. However, while we believe cautious positioning remains prudent, through our relative value framework we continue to maintain spread in excess of the index along with a yield advantage. The Fund's investment-grade corporate-bond exposure is focused on BBB rated securities. Credit selection has been fine-tuned towards sectors and issuers we believe will be more resilient should a slowdown occur. We continue to find attractive yield and relative value in non-agency mortgage-backed securities (MBS) and commercial mortgage-backed securities (CMBS).

## Fund Allocation

The Fund's number of holdings increased from 290 to 340 in the first quarter of 2026. The allocation to asset-backed securities (ABS), declined from 10.01% to 7.92% with much of that coming from CLOs, while investment-grade corporate exposure was reduced from 38.14% to 36.62%. U.S. Treasury exposure increased from 22.18% to 25.05%, while the investment team added to non-agency mortgage-backed securities, which rose from 9.38% to 10.39%. The shift in allocations impacted the portfolio's overall complexion at the margin, as the reduction in ABS exposure extended the average life by 0.2 years to 8.57 years, while the coupon declined from 4.91% to 4.35% in light of the shift from credit to Treasuries.

## Contributors/Detractors

On an asset-class basis, an overweight to ABS and exposure to non-agency MBS were contributors to the Fund's total return, while an underweight to agency MBS and an overweight to corporate bonds detracted. Looking at security selection, issuers in consumer non-cyclicals, auto-backed ABS, and energy were additive during the period, while selection in banking, REITS, and agency MBS detracted. The fund's overweight to duration with exposure to longer-dated U.S. government bonds was a detractor from relative performance as yields rose across the curve in the first quarter.

## Manager Outlook

Overall, economic fundamentals have been supportive of corporate and consumer borrowers. Tax refunds and data-center fueled capex have been positive for growth. However, dispersion has continued in both consumer and corporate markets. As it pertains to the corporate market, this has been a theme over the past year, and now AI disruption could further the gap across various industries. The energy price shock from the Mideast conflict will also be another strain impacting some companies and consumers more than others. These are significant risks that we, the market, and the new Fed chair will have to contend with in the second quarter and the remainder of the year.

Fixed income technicals were pressured by significant new issuance, particularly in the U.S. corporate market. March alone

**Past Performance is not indicative of future results.** Returns reflect reinvestment of dividends/distribution. Investment return and principal value will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance quoted. Performance current to the most recent month end may be found at [www.AristotleFunds.com/performance](http://www.AristotleFunds.com/performance) or by calling 1-844-274-7885. The investment advisor has contractually agreed to limit certain expenses through 7/31/28. Please see the current prospectus for detailed information.

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saw \$143 billion of issuance, which was the largest month on record since 2020. Large M&A-backed financing, as well as increasing hyper-scaler issuance fueled the expanding primary market. This could be a theme in the corporate market for the full year, with some strategists suggesting primary issuance could surpass \$2.0 trillion this year. Demand for yield was quite supportive of fixed income markets last year. This could be the case again this year as overall yields remain historically elevated (U.S. corporates yielded an attractive 5.14% at March month end).

The OAS of the Bloomberg Corporate Index widened by 11 basis points in the first quarter. The corporate index started the year with an OAS of 78 bps, which is just a handful of basis points away from 15-year lows. Underperformance in corporate spreads continued as agency MBS spreads, which were 21 bps lower in 2025, widened just 2 bps in the first quarter. This shift in relative value continues to move the marker closer to the corporate market. With a yield-to-worst of 5.14%, corporate

yields continue to screen positively against other areas of the investment-grade market.

Our Fund's flexibility continues to be a key differentiator in navigating a complex macro backdrop. Through our relative value framework, we continue to maintain spread in excess of its index along with a yield advantage. The fund's investment-grade corporate-bond exposure is focused on BBB rated securities. We continue to seek and find value in non-agency securitized asset classes for not only offering spread and yield advantages over corporates, but as a diversifier to traditional credit. We also find attractive yield and relative value in investment-grade collateralized loan obligation (CLO) debt and senior asset-backed securities (ABS). Our fundamental research leads us to favor industries such as U.S. global systemically important banks (G-SIBs), utilities, selective office-REITs and aerospace and defense related companies. Additionally, we are cautious on consumer cyclical sectors, healthcare-related names under M&A pressure, and retail-related sectors.

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Performance as of 3/31/26

	Total Returns (%)			Annualized Total Returns (%)			Top 10 Issuers	Weight (%)
	3-Month	YTD	1-Year	3-Year	5-Year	Since Fund Inception		
Class I-2	-0.02	-0.02	4.39	4.18	0.72	0.16	Government Of The United States Of America	25.05
Class I	-0.12	-0.12	4.63	4.26	0.77	0.20	FNMA	9.99
Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index	-0.05	-0.05	4.35	3.63	0.31	-0.31	FHLMC	7.07
							GNMA	3.35
							JPMorgan Chase & Co.	1.71
							Morgan Stanley	1.65
							Bank Of America Corp	1.30
							Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.	1.19
							Wells Fargo & Company	1.19
							GCAT	1.12
							<b>Total</b>	<b>53.63</b>

**Past Performance is not indicative of future results.** Returns reflect reinvestment of dividends/distribution. Investment return and principal value will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance quoted. Performance current to the most recent month end may be found at [www.AristotleFunds.com/performance](http://www.AristotleFunds.com/performance) or by calling 1-844-274-7885. The investment advisor has contractually agreed to limit certain expenses through 7/31/28. Please see the current prospectus for detailed information.

Gross/Net annual operating expenses for Class I-2 are 0.48%/0.48%. Gross/Net annual operating expenses for Class I are 0.44%/0.44%, inception date 12/14/20.

Indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested in directly. Further, they hold no cash and incur no expenses. All share classes may not be available at all firms and not all investors may be eligible for all share classes.

Performance reflects any applicable fee waivers and expense reimbursements.

## Definitions

One **basis point** equals 0.01%.

The **Bloomberg 1-3 Year US Government/Credit Bond Index** is a performance benchmark of U.S. investment-grade government and corporate bonds with maturities of one to three years.

The **Bloomberg Asset-Backed Securities (ABS) Index** is the ABS component of the Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Index that measures the performance of ABS with the following collateral types: credit and charge card, auto and utility loans. All securities have an average life of at least one year.

The **Bloomberg Short Treasury Total Return Index** is a performance benchmark of all U.S. Treasuries that have a remaining maturity between one and twelve months.

The **Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index** is composed of investment-grade U.S. government bonds, investment-grade corporate bonds, mortgage pass-through securities, and asset-backed securities, and is commonly used to track the performance of U.S. investment-grade bonds.

The **Bloomberg US Corporate Bond Index** includes publicly issued U.S. corporate and specified foreign debentures and secured notes that meet the specified maturity, liquidity, and quality requirements.

The **Bloomberg US Corporate High Yield Bond Index** measures the USD-denominated, high yield, fixed-rate corporate bond market.

The **Bloomberg US Credit Index** measures the investment grade, US dollar-denominated, fixed-rate, taxable corporate and government-related bond markets. It is composed of the US Corporate Index and a non-corporate component that includes non-US agencies, sovereigns, supranationals and local authorities.

The **Bloomberg US High-Yield 2% Issuer Capped Bond Index** measures the performance of high-yield bonds with a 2% maximum allocation to any one issuer.

The **Dow Jones Industrial Average index (DJIA)** tracks the share price of the top 30 large, publicly owned U.S. companies which is often used as an indicator of the overall condition of the U.S. stock market.

**Duration** is often used to measure a bond's or fund's sensitivity to interest rates. The longer a fund's duration, the more sensitive it is to interest-rate risk. The shorter a fund's duration, the less sensitive it is to interest-rate risk.

**Morningstar LSTA US Leveraged Loan Index** is a market-value weighted index designed to measure the performance of the US leveraged loan market.

The **Nasdaq Composite** is a stock market index that consists of the stocks that are listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange.

**Option adjusted spread (OAS)** is the measurement of the spread of a fixed-income security rate and the risk-free rate of return.

The **S&P 500 index** is a market capitalization-weighted index of 500 widely held stocks often used as a proxy for the U.S. stock market.

**Yield to worst** is the lowest potential yield that can be received on a bond without the issuer actually defaulting.

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Investing involves risk. Principal loss is possible. The Fund is subject to liquidity risk (the risk that an investment may be difficult to purchase, value, and sell particularly during adverse market conditions, because there is a limited market for the investment, or there are restrictions on resale) and credit risk (the risk an issuer may be unable or unwilling to meet its financial obligations, risking default). High-yield/high-risk bonds (“junk bonds”) and floating-rate loans (usually rated below investment grade) have greater risk of default than higher-rated securities/higher-quality bonds that may have a lower yield. The Fund is also subject to foreign-markets risk.

This commentary represents the views of the portfolio managers at Aristotle Pacific Capital, LLC as of the publication date and are presented for informational purposes only. These views should not be construed as investment advice, an endorsement of any security, mutual fund, sector or index, or to predict performance of any investment. Any forward-looking statements are not guaranteed. All material is compiled from sources believed to be reliable, but accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The opinions expressed herein are subject to change without notice as market and other conditions warrant. Sector names in this commentary are provided by the Fund’s portfolio managers and could be different if provided by a third party.

***Investors should consider a fund’s investment goal, risk, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. The prospectus contains this and other information about the fund and can be obtained at [www.AristotleFunds.com](http://www.AristotleFunds.com). It should be read carefully before investing.***

The Fund changed its investment strategies on February 17, 2025. Accordingly, any performance information for periods prior to February 17, 2025 is attributable to the Fund’s previous investment strategies.

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**Diversification does not assure a profit, nor does it protect against a loss in a declining market.**

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