

# Market Update

March 18, 2026  
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## This week in the Markets...

This report focuses on the US stock market's performance during the current week of March 16-20, 2026 (as of the morning of March 18, 2026), with detailed emphasis on overnight and premarket developments. So far this week we've seen modest gains as markets digested Fed policy expectations and ongoing Iran war developments, with oil prices remaining elevated but volatile.

### Performance This Week (March 16-20, 2026, to Date)

- Monday (March 16): Strong rebound — best day since war began — as oil retreated; S&P 500 up 1.0% (+67.19 points) to 6,699.38; Dow up 0.8% (+387.94 points) to 46,946.41; Nasdaq up 1.2% (+268.82 points) to 22,374.18.
- Tuesday (March 17): Modest advances despite lingering war and oil pressures; S&P 500 up 0.25% (+16.71 points) to 6,716.09; Dow up 0.1% (+46.85 points) to 46,993.26; Nasdaq up 0.47% (+105.35 points) to 22,479.53.

Weekly to date: Major indices positive for the second straight session, building on Monday's sharp rebound amid easing oil concerns and Fed meeting anticipation; cumulative gains reflect partial relief from prior heavy losses.

## **Focused Reporting: What Happened Overnight (March 17 Evening to March 18 Morning)**

Overnight and premarket on March 18 (Wednesday), futures rose modestly as oil prices dipped slightly, boosting sentiment ahead of the Federal Reserve's rate decision later today. The Fed is widely expected to hold rates steady at 3.50%-3.75%, with focus on updated projections amid war-driven inflation risks. No major new war escalations overnight; attention on potential diplomatic signals and energy supply updates.

- Futures: Dow futures up ~0.3-0.6%; S&P 500 futures up ~0.4-0.5%; Nasdaq futures up ~0.5-0.7%.
- Oil: Prices easing modestly (Brent around \$100-103 range after prior volatility); supply fears persist but tempered by reserve releases.
- Other moves: Treasury yields stable; safe-havens steady; global markets firmer in early trading.

Sentiment: Cautious optimism prevails with Fed decision looming; rebound momentum intact but sensitive to policy tone and war headlines.

### **Issues Expected to Influence Market Performance in the Near Term**

Fed policy and war/energy dynamics key drivers.

- Federal Reserve Meeting Outcome: Expected hold today; updated dot plot and Powell comments scrutinized for inflation outlook amid energy shocks; "higher for longer" risks if war pressures persist.
- US-Israel-Iran War (Ongoing Third Week): Persistent disruptions (Hormuz threats, infrastructure hits); no resolution but some stabilization; risks renewed oil spikes if it escalates.

- **Oil Price Volatility:** Elevated near \$100+ despite reserves; pullbacks support equities but surges fuel inflation/stagflation concerns.
- **Inflation and Economic Pressures:** Energy-driven risks complicate Fed path; weak prior data lingers; CPI clarity needed.
- **Risk Sentiment and Sector Rotation:** Tech/AI resilience in rebound; energy/defense sensitive; broader volatility high on policy/war news.

Continued swings likely; upside on dovish Fed/de-escalation, downside on hawkish tone or escalation.

### **Conclusion**

This week's positive momentum — Monday's strong rebound extended modestly Tuesday — sets an optimistic premarket tone ahead of the Fed decision, with futures up and oil easing. Near-term hinges on policy guidance, war stability, and energy prices. We are watching the Fed statements closely, continuing to favor diversified exposure, and we continue to monitor geopolitical/energy headlines in this volatile environment.

## References:

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