



## Peter Bethke

President, A+ Mortgage Services, Inc  
 Personal NMLS 264756 Corporate NMLS 259353 Florida  
 W188S7820 Racine Ave suite 100 Muskego, WI 53150

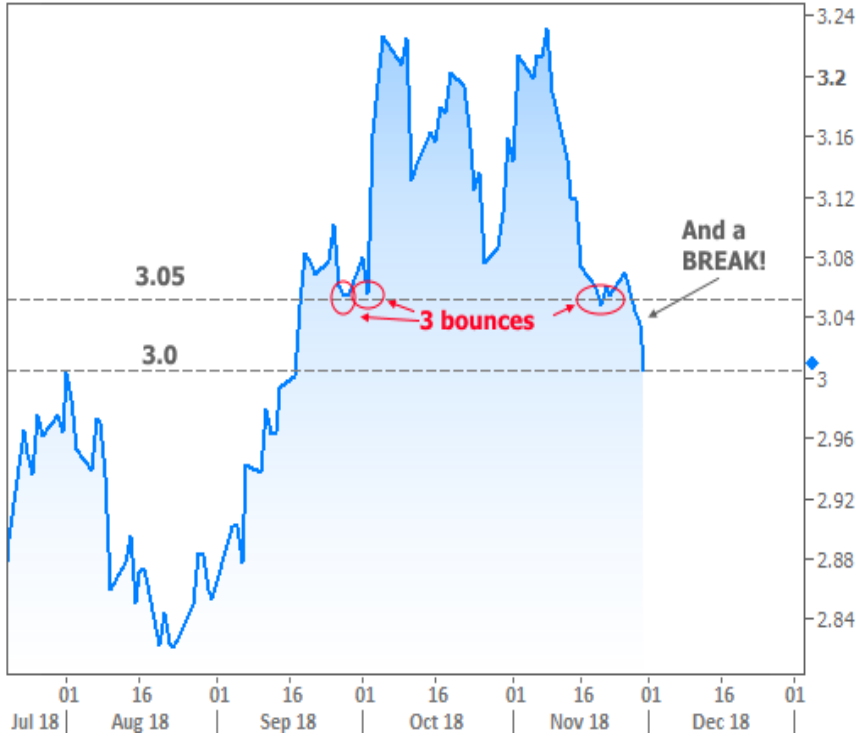
Office: 414-405-8065  
 Mobile: 414-405-8065  
 Fax: 262-679-8800  
[pete@aplusmortgageservices.com](mailto:pete@aplusmortgageservices.com)  
[View My Website](#)

## Are The Highest Interest Rates Behind Us?

Relative to the last 2 years of pain for rates, a **sense of hope** has emerged, seemingly overnight, as the 10yr Treasury yield (an important benchmark for longer-term rates like mortgages) broke through a key level.

3.05% had **consistently blocked** the advance of falling rates for more than 2 months. The most recent bounce happened just last week. Breaking through sets us up to challenge the big psychological barrier at 3.0%.

10yr Treasury



The catalyst for the late week surge was a **speech by Fed Chair Jerome Powell**. The Fed sets monetary policies that can have a direct impact on rates. Those policies are largely a function of objective economic data, but there is some room for interpretation.

The Fed's interpretation has arguably been fairly balanced over the past few years. On the one hand, they've been hiking at a much slower pace compared to past cycles. On the other hand, they've been hiking **regularly** and their outlook has clearly called for those hikes to **continue** well into 2019.

## National Average Mortgage Rates



|                            | Rate  | Change | Points |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| <b>Mortgage News Daily</b> |       |        |        |
| 30 Yr. Fixed               | 6.43% | +0.02  | 0.00   |
| 15 Yr. Fixed               | 5.95% | 0.00   | 0.00   |
| 30 Yr. FHA                 | 5.82% | +0.02  | 0.00   |
| 30 Yr. Jumbo               | 6.62% | 0.00   | 0.00   |
| 5/1 ARM                    | 6.28% | -0.01  | 0.00   |

### Freddie Mac

|              |       |       |      |
|--------------|-------|-------|------|
| 30 Yr. Fixed | 6.35% | -0.51 | 0.00 |
| 15 Yr. Fixed | 5.51% | -0.65 | 0.00 |

Rates as of: 8/30

## Market Data

|                | Price / Yield | Change  |
|----------------|---------------|---------|
| MBS UMBS 5.0   | 99.35         | -0.16   |
| MBS GNMA 5.0   | 99.91         | -0.04   |
| 10 YR Treasury | 3.9039        | +0.0424 |
| 30 YR Treasury | 4.1932        | +0.0468 |

Pricing as of: 8/30 5:59PM EST

## Recent Housing Data

|                     |        | Value | Change  |
|---------------------|--------|-------|---------|
| Mortgage Apps       | Aug 28 | 226.9 | +0.49%  |
| Building Permits    | Mar    | 1.46M | -3.95%  |
| Housing Starts      | Mar    | 1.32M | -13.15% |
| New Home Sales      | Mar    | 693K  | +4.68%  |
| Pending Home Sales  | Feb    | 75.6  | +1.75%  |
| Existing Home Sales | Feb    | 3.97M | -0.75%  |
| Builder Confidence  | Mar    | 51    | +6.25%  |

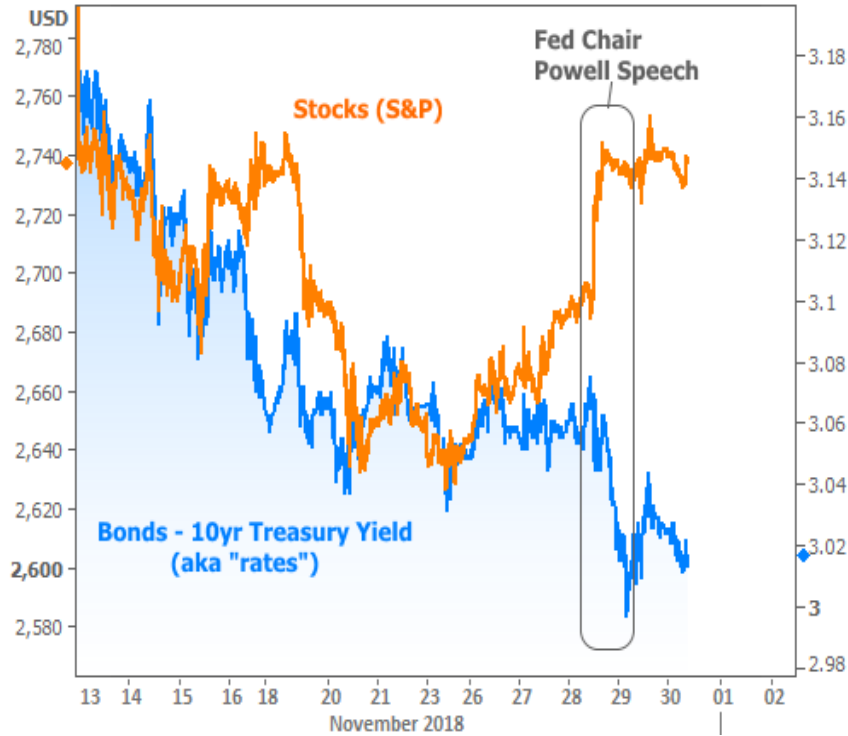
# US Housing Market Weekly

Powell's speech upset the balance as far as many investors were concerned. Back in October, Powell said rates were "a long way from neutral, probably" before adding that the Fed may even raise rates past neutral (a level that neither promotes or discourages economic growth). He'd been sticking to that script regularly **until this week** when he said rates are now "just below" neutral.

Beyond the comment on rates, Powell also noted that the Fed's rate hike outlook is **no guarantee** of a policy path (translation: they might not end up hiking as much as anticipated). The determining factor in that policy path will be economic data. On that topic, Powell said the Fed "will be paying very close attention."

Stocks and bonds both seized on the **apparent shift** in tone from the Fed Chair. In general, when the Fed is perceived as less likely to hike rates, both sides of the market rally. That can be seen in the following chart with stocks surging and rates falling.

Stocks vs Bonds



Combined with the positive move in rates that began 3 weeks ago, a sense of hope seems to be returning to the bond market. Keep in mind that at least **some** of that "hope" will come at the **expense** of stocks and the economy. After all, rates tend to fall when the economy is weak.

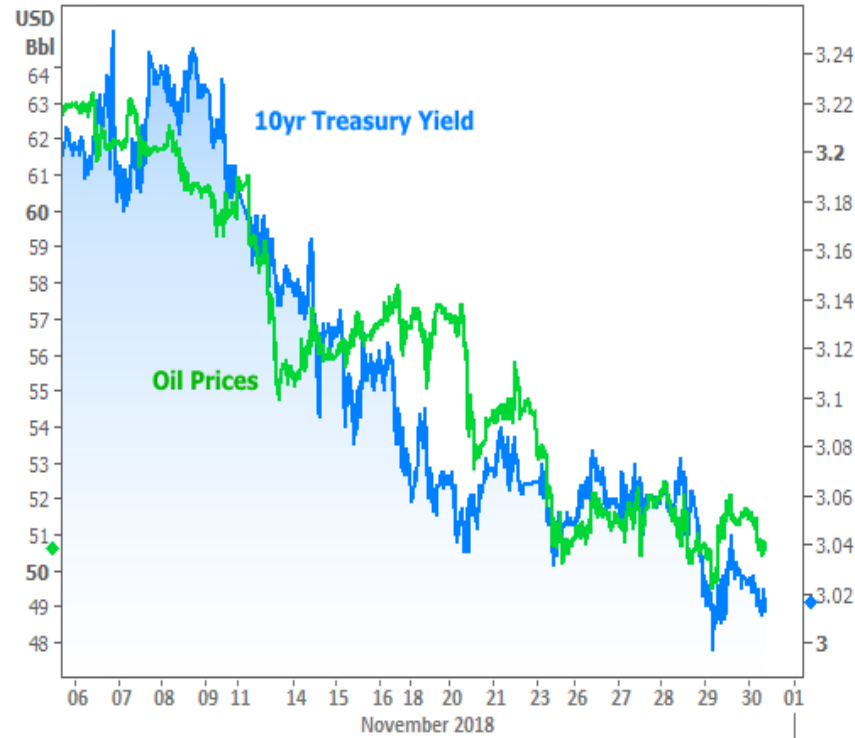
# US Housing Market Weekly

Stocks vs Bonds



You might notice that the blue line (bonds) was more willing to move lower than the orange line (stocks) in November. Of course we just discussed the Powell effect, but well before Powell's speech, we can see bonds setting "lower lows" even as stocks try to hold the same defensive floor. One potential reason is **weakness in oil prices**. Oil has a bearing on inflation, and inflation has a bearing on bonds. Falling oil prices can add downward pressure on rates.

Bonds vs Oil



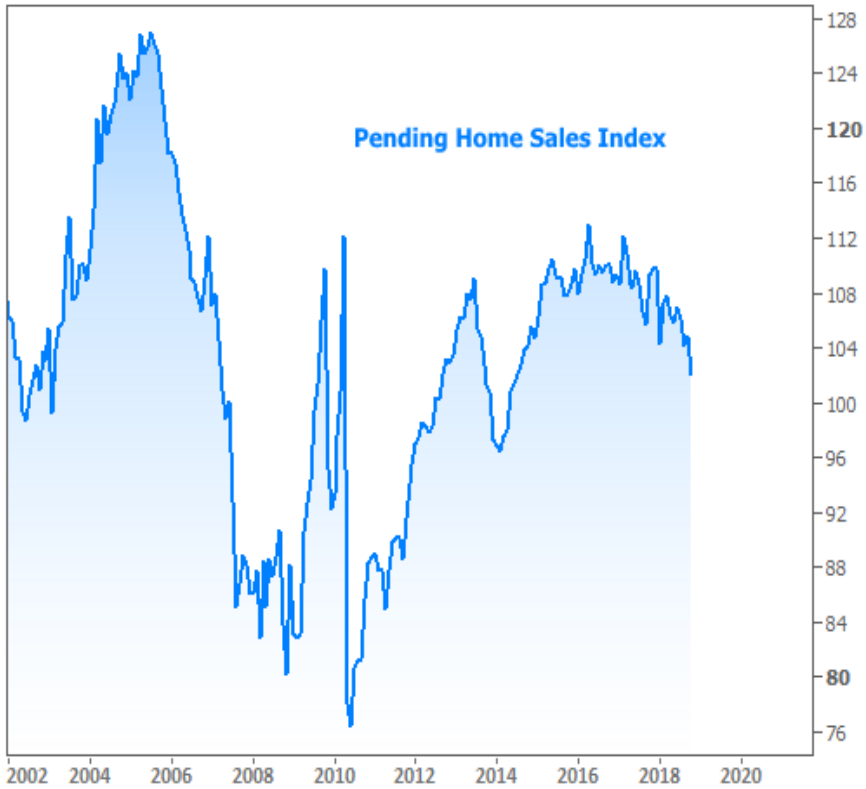
# US Housing Market Weekly

If these positive influences stick around, the highest rates for this economic cycle may indeed already be behind us. That **couldn't come a moment too soon** for the housing market where sales continued to slump according to two reports out this week.

New Home Sales



Pending Home Sales



Still, it's not necessarily safe to assume rates will keep moving lower. Keep Powell's comments about economic data in mind. The Fed will be watching the data closely. To whatever extent next week's important economic reports disappoint, **hope will remain alive** for rates. But if those reports are stronger than expected, rates could easily bounce back toward recent highs.

Subscribe to my newsletter online at: <http://housingnewsletters.com/aplasmortgage>

## Celebrating my 21st year and specializing in lending in Wisconsin, NW Florida coast and Hwy 30a

You're in the right place. Helping people with home loans is all I have done for almost 21 years. Clear explanations, patience and expert advice are what my clients can expect. Information and education make the difference and to help people understand the loan process. Spending my day helping my clients is what I love to do!

Peter Bethke

