

ClearBridge Growth ESG Portfolios

Commentary | as of March 31, 2026

Key Takeaways

- **Markets:** Surging volatility pressured U.S. equities to start 2026, as rapidly evolving macro conditions and the outbreak of a military conflict in the Middle East contributed to sharp shifts in investor sentiment. A broad-based sell off among more liquid, larger cap holdings put pressure on the Russell 3000 Growth Index, which declined 9.5% for the quarter, while small and mid cap growth categories held up relatively better, with the Russell Midcap Growth and Russell 2000 Growth indexes declining 6.3% and 2.8%, respectively.
- **Contributors:** Holdings in Vertiv, Freeport-McMoRan and Johnson Controls. Stock selection in consumer discretionary and industrials sectors, overweight to materials.
- **Detractors:** Holdings in AppLovin, Robinhood Markets and Shopify. Stock selection and an overweight to the IT sector, a lack of exposure to energy.
- **Outlook:** Our outlook remains consistent: while macro uncertainty and volatility are likely to persist and may even increase as geopolitical developments evolve, these environments often create the most attractive opportunities for active, bottom-up investors. We continue to emphasize balance — owning companies with both offensive growth potential and defensive characteristics, including strong balance sheets, durable cash flows and capable management teams. This approach is designed to support performance across a wide range of market environments, rather than relying on a single factor or theme.

Performance Review

- The Portfolios underperformed their Russell Midcap Growth benchmark during the first quarter, giving back a small portion of the strong relative performance achieved over the past several quarters. Performance was pressured primarily by stock selection within the information technology (IT) and financials sectors, while strength in historically underrepresented industrials and consumer discretionary sectors underscored the benefits of our multi-year portfolio diversification efforts.
- Within IT, a broad-based selloff in software and higher-multiple growth names weighed on results. Despite solid quarterly results, holdings such as Autodesk, Shopify and CrowdStrike declined as investors questioned growth durability and valuation levels across the subsector. AppLovin, which operates a software platform for advertisers to enhance the marketing and monetization of their content — particularly within mobile apps — was also a notable detractor, on fears of AI disruption and rising competition from Meta. We see AppLovin as an early adopter and longer-term beneficiary of AI, as greater gaming and application development should increase the need for discovery.
- In financials, Robinhood Markets detracted from performance due to a pullback in retail trading volumes and bitcoin pricing following a strong 2025. While near-term cryptocurrency trends have moderated, we continue to see long-term potential in the platform's ability to expand its ecosystem and capture share across a broader set of financial services offerings.
- In industrials, Vertiv, a manufacturer of power and precision cooling systems, continued to benefit from the buildout of data center and AI infrastructure, while relatively new addition XPO, the fourth-largest less-than-truckload carrier in North America, continued to benefit from initiatives under its new leadership to improve service levels, pricing discipline and margins.
- Holdings in the consumer discretionary sector were also key contributors, led TJX, which put up better than expected same-store sales growth despite a more constrained consumer spending environment.

Outlook

- Our outlook remains consistent: while macro uncertainty and volatility are likely to persist and may even increase as geopolitical developments evolve, these environments often create potentially the most attractive opportunities for active, bottom-up investors. We continue to emphasize balance — owning companies with both offensive growth potential and defensive characteristics, including strong balance sheets, durable cash flows and capable management teams. This approach is designed to support performance across a wide range of market environments, rather than relying on a single factor or theme.
- Importantly, we remain active. We are not standing still in the face of volatility but are instead using it to refine the portfolio — trimming positions where risk-reward has become less favorable and adding to high-conviction ideas where valuations have become more compelling. We also believe the ongoing broadening of market leadership, particularly beyond mega cap technology, is a constructive development for our investment universe. After a prolonged period of concentration, a more balanced market should reward differentiated, high active share portfolios such as ours.

Top Equity Issuers (% of Total)

Holding	Portfolio
Vertiv Holdings Co	5.91
TE Connectivity PLC	5.43
Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc	5.34
Broadcom Inc	5.31
TJX Cos Inc/The	4.97
Johnson Controls International plc	4.28
Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc	4.05
Autodesk Inc	2.86
Freeport-McMoRan Inc	2.84
CrowdStrike Holdings Inc	2.84

Average annual total returns (%) - as of March 31, 2026-PRELIMINARY

Composite	3-Mo*	6-Mo*	YTD*	1-Yr	3-Yr	5-Yr	10-Yr	15-Yr	20-Yr	25-Yr	Inception	Inception Date
Net of Fees	-9.75	-12.26	-9.75	7.60	7.72	-0.02	5.54	6.94	—	—	6.47	6/30/2006
Pure Gross of Fees	-9.06	-10.92	-9.06	10.81	10.93	2.98	8.69	10.13	—	—	9.66	6/30/2006
Benchmark	-6.35	-9.82	-6.35	9.56	12.74	5.37	11.69	11.12	—	—	9.94	—

*Cumulative total returns

Benchmark(s)

Benchmark = Russell Midcap Growth Index

The strategy returns shown are preliminary composite returns, subject to future revision (downward or upward).

Past performance is not a guarantee of future results. An investment in this strategy can lose value. Please visit www.franklintempleton.com for the latest performance figures. Investors cannot invest directly in an index, and unmanaged index returns do not reflect any fees, expenses or sales charges.

Fees: Periods less than one year are not annualized. Performance results are for the composite which includes all actual, fully discretionary accounts with substantially similar investment policies and objectives managed to the composite's investment strategy. Composite returns are stated in U.S. dollars and assume reinvestment of any dividends, interest income, capital gains, or other earnings. The composite may include account(s) that are gross of fees and pure gross of fees. "Pure" gross-of-fee returns do not reflect the deduction of any expenses, including transaction costs. A traditional (or "true") gross-of-fee return reflects performance after the reduction of transaction costs but before the reduction of the investment advisory fee. The gross-of-fee return may include a blend of "true" gross-of-fee returns for non-wrap accounts and "pure" gross-of-fee returns for wrap accounts. Net-of-fee returns is reduced by a model "wrap fee" (3.0% is the maximum anticipated wrap fee for equity and balanced portfolios) which includes trading expenses as well as investment management, administrative and custodial fees. The model wrap fee used represents the highest anticipated wrap fee applicable to the strategy. Actual fees and account minimums may vary.

For fee schedules, contact your financial professional, or if you enter into an agreement directly with Franklin Templeton Private Portfolio Group, LLC ("FTPPG"), refer to FTPPG's Form ADV Part 2A disclosure document. Management and performance of individual accounts may vary for reasons that include the existence of different implementation practices and model requirements in different investment programs.

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What are the Risks?

All investments involve risks, including possible loss of principal. To the extent the portfolio invests in a **concentration of certain securities, regions or industries**, it is subject to increased volatility. **Small- and mid-cap stocks** involve greater risks and volatility than large-cap stocks. The managers' **environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategies** may limit the types and number of investments available and, as a result, may forgo favorable market opportunities or underperform strategies that are not subject to such criteria. There is no guarantee that the strategy's ESG directives will be successful or will result in better performance.

Glossary

Active Share is a measure of the percentage of stock holdings in a manager's portfolio that differs from the benchmark index.

The **Russell 2000 Growth Index** measures the performance of the small-cap growth segment of the U.S. equity universe. Source: FTSE.

The **Russell 3000 Growth Index** measures the performance of those Russell 3000 Index companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values. Source: FTSE.

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The **Russell Midcap Growth Index** measures the performance of the mid-cap growth segment of the U.S. equity universe.

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Source: FTSE.

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