

**NEWS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**JOHN HANCOCK PREFERRED INCOME FUND III DECLARES INCREASED MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION**

**BOSTON, MA (April 2, 2012)** – John Hancock Preferred Income Fund III (NYSE: HPS) (the “Fund”) announced today an increase in its monthly distribution rate by 8.91% to \$0.1222 per share, up from the previous month’s distribution rate of \$0.1122 per share. The increased distribution rate is effective with the Fund’s next distribution payment on April 30, 2012 and is payable to holders of record on April 12, 2012 with an ex-dividend date of April 10, 2012.

Ticker	Fund Name	Distribution Per Share	Change From Distribution Paid in Previous Month	Market Price as of 3/30/2012	Annualized Current Distribution Rate at Market
HPS	Preferred Income Fund III	\$0.1222	\$0.0100	\$17.80	8.24%

Over the past year there have been several positive developments that have enabled the Fund to increase its distribution, including:

- An increase in the overall dividend yield of the portfolio – the new distribution rate more closely reflects the Fund’s current earnings
- The Fund increased the amount of its leverage and the Fund’s overall borrowing costs declined

A portion of a Fund’s current distribution may include sources other than net investment income, including a return of capital. Investors should understand that a return of capital is not a distribution from income or gains of a Fund. As required under the Investment Company Act of 1940, a notice with the estimated components of the distribution will be sent to shareholders at the time of payment if it does not consist solely of net investment income. Such notice will also be posted to the Fund’s website at [www.jhfunds.com](http://www.jhfunds.com). The notice should not be used to prepare tax returns as the estimates indicated in the notice may differ from the ultimate federal income tax characterization of distributions. After the end of each calendar year, investors will be sent a Form 1099-DIV informing them how to report distributions received during that year for federal income tax purposes.

*Statements in this press release that are not historical facts are forward-looking statements as defined by the United States securities laws. You should exercise caution in interpreting and relying on forward-looking statements because they are subject to uncertainties and other factors which are, in some cases, beyond the Fund’s control and could cause actual results to differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.*

*An investor should consider a Fund's investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses carefully before investing.*

**About John Hancock Funds**

The Boston-based mutual fund business unit of John Hancock Financial, John Hancock Funds, manages more than \$66.4 billion in open-end funds, closed-end funds, private accounts, retirement plans and related party assets for individual and institutional investors at December 31, 2011.

**About John Hancock Financial and Manulife Financial Corporation**

John Hancock Financial is a unit of Manulife Financial Corporation, a leading Canadian-based financial services group serving millions of customers in 22 countries and territories worldwide. Operating as Manulife Financial in Canada and in most of Asia, and primarily as John Hancock in the United States, Manulife Financial Corporation offers clients a diverse range of financial protection products and wealth management services through its extensive network of employees, agents and distribution partners. Funds under management by Manulife Financial and its subsidiaries were Cdn\$500 billion (US\$491 billion) at December 31, 2011.

Manulife Financial Corporation trades as 'MFC' on the TSX, NYSE and PSE, and under '945' on the SEHK. Manulife Financial can be found on the Internet at [www.manulife.com](http://www.manulife.com).

The John Hancock unit, through its insurance companies, comprises one of the largest life insurers in the United States. John Hancock offers a broad range of financial products and services, including [life insurance](#), fixed and variable [annuities](#), [fixed products](#), [mutual funds](#), [401\(k\) plans](#), [long-term care insurance](#), [college savings](#), and other forms of business insurance. Additional information about John Hancock may be found at [www.johnhancock.com](http://www.johnhancock.com).