



VIRTUS VARIABLE INSURANCE TRUST
PROSPECTUS

Virtus KAR Small-Cap Growth Series

The Prospectus describes the Virtus KAR Small-Cap Growth Series (the "Series"), which is available as an underlying investment through a variable life insurance policy or a variable annuity contract (a "variable contract"). For information about your variable contract, including information about insurance-related expenses, see the prospectus for your variable contract.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has not approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense. Please carefully consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of the Series before investing. For this and other information about any Virtus Variable Insurance Trust series, call 800-367-5877 or visit virtus.com for a prospectus. Read it carefully before you invest.

April 30, 2018

**Not FDIC Insured
No Bank Guarantee
May Lose Value**

Virtus KAR Small-Cap Growth Series

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Virtus KAR Small-Cap Growth Series

Fund Summary

Investment Objective

The Series has an investment objective of long-term capital growth.

Fees and Expenses

The following table describes the fees and expenses you may pay if you buy and hold shares of the Virtus KAR Small-Cap Growth Series. The table does not include any fees or sales charges under the variable contracts for which the Series is an investment option. If they were included, your costs would be higher.

Shareholder Fees (<i>fees paid directly from your investment</i>)	Class A	Class I
Shareholder Fees	None	None

Annual Series Operating Expenses (<i>expenses that you pay each year as a percentage of the value of your investment.</i>)	Class A	Class I
Management Fees	0.85%	0.85%
Distribution and/or Service (12b-1) Fees	0.25%	None
Other Expenses	0.20%	0.20%
Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses	0.01%	0.01%
Total Annual Series Operating Expenses ^(a)	1.31%	1.06%
Less: Expense Reimbursement ^(b)	(0.11)%	(0.11)%
Total Annual Series Operating Expenses After Expense Reimbursement ^{(a)(b)}	1.20%	0.95%

- (a) The Total Annual Series Operating Expenses do not correlate to the ratio of expenses to average net assets appearing in the Financial Highlights tables, which tables reflect only the operating expenses of the Series and do not include acquired fund fees and expenses.
- (b) The Series' investment adviser has contractually agreed to limit the Series' total annual operating expenses (excluding certain expenses, such as front-end or contingent deferred sales charges, taxes, leverage expenses, interest, brokerage commissions, expenses incurred in connection with any merger or reorganization, unusual or infrequently occurring expenses (such as litigation), acquired fund fees and expenses, and dividend expenses, if any) so that such expenses do not exceed 1.19% for Class A Shares and 0.94% for Class I Shares through April 30, 2019. Following the contractual period, the adviser may discontinue these expense reimbursement arrangements at any time. Under certain conditions, the adviser may recapture operating expenses reimbursed under these arrangements for a period of three years after the date on which it was incurred or waived by Virtus.

Example

This example is intended to help you compare the cost of investing in the Series with the cost of investing in other mutual funds. The example assumes that you invest \$10,000 in the Series for the time periods indicated and then redeem all of your shares at the end of those periods. The example also assumes that your investment has a 5% return each year, that the Series' total operating expenses remain the same and that the expense reimbursement arrangement remains in place for the contractual period. The example does not reflect variable contract fees and charges, and if it did, the costs shown would be higher. Although your actual costs may be higher or lower, based on these assumptions your costs would be:

	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years	10 Years
Class A	\$122	\$404	\$708	\$1,569
Class I	\$97	\$326	\$574	\$1,284

Portfolio Turnover

The Series pays transaction costs, such as commissions, when it buys and sells securities (or "turns over" its portfolio). A higher portfolio turnover rate may indicate higher transaction costs. These costs, which are not reflected in Annual Series Operating Expenses or in the Example, affect the Series' performance. During the most recent fiscal year, the Series' portfolio turnover rate was 18% of the average value of its portfolio.

Principal Investment Strategies

The Series pursues long-term capital appreciation in the small-cap sector while seeking to provide the risk characteristics of the less volatile large-cap S&P 500[®] Index. The Series invests in a select group of small-cap

companies that the subadviser believes to be growth companies and undervalued relative to their future growth potential. The investment strategy emphasizes companies assessed by the subadviser as having a competitive advantage, strong management and low financial risk and as able to grow over market cycles, despite their discounted valuations.

Under normal circumstances, the Series invests at least 80% of its assets in common stocks of small capitalization companies. As of the date of this Prospectus, the subadviser considers small capitalization companies for this purpose to be those companies that, at the time of initial purchase, have market capitalizations within the range of companies included in the Russell 2000[®] Growth Index on a rolling three-year basis. Because small capitalization companies are defined by reference to an index, the total market capitalization of companies in which the Series invests may vary with market conditions. As of December 31, 2017, the market capitalization range of companies included in the Russell 2000[®] Growth Index over the past three years was \$6 million to \$13.5 billion. Generally, the Series invests in approximately 20-35 securities at any given time.

Principal Risks

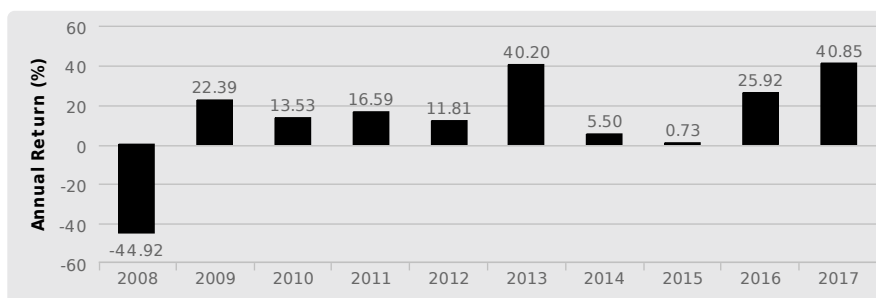
The Series may not achieve its objective(s), and it is not intended to be a complete investment program. The value of the Series' investments that supports your share value may decrease. If between the time you purchase shares and the time you sell shares the value of the Series' investments decreases, you will lose money. Investment values can decrease for a number of reasons. Conditions affecting the overall economy, specific industries or companies in which the Series invests can be worse than expected, and investments may fail to perform as the subadviser expects. As a result, the value of your shares may decrease. Purchase and redemption activities by variable contract owners may impact the management of the Series and its ability to achieve its investment objective(s). The redemption by one or more large variable contract owners or groups of variable contract owners of their holdings in the Series could have an adverse impact on the remaining variable contract owners in the Series including by accelerating the realization of capital gains and increasing the Series' transaction costs. The principal risks of investing in the Series are:

- > **Depositary Receipts Risk.** The risk that investments in foreign companies through depositary receipts will expose the Series to the same risks as direct investments in securities of foreign issuers.
- > **Equity Securities Risk.** The risk that events negatively affecting issuers, industries or financial markets in which the Series invests, will impact the value of the stocks held by the Series and thus, the value of the Series' shares over short or extended periods. Investments in a particular style or in small or medium-sized companies may enhance that risk.
- > **Foreign Investing Risk.** The risk that the prices of foreign securities in the Series' portfolio will be more volatile than those of domestic securities, or will be negatively affected by currency fluctuations, less regulated or liquid securities markets, or economic, political or other developments.
- > **Growth Stocks Risk.** The risk that the Series' investments in growth stocks will be more volatile than investments in other types of stocks, or will perform differently from the market as a whole and from other types of stocks.
- > **Limited Number of Investments Risk.** The risk that the Series' portfolio will be more susceptible to factors adversely affecting issuers of securities in the Series' portfolio than would a fund holding a greater number of securities.
- > **Market Volatility Risk.** The risk that the value of the securities in which the Series invests may go up or down in response to the prospects of individual issuers and/or general economic conditions. Price changes may be temporary or may last for extended periods.
- > **Small Market Capitalization Companies Risk.** The risk that the Series' investments in small market capitalization companies may be less liquid and more vulnerable to adverse business or economic developments, which may increase the volatility and risk of loss to the Series, as compared with investments in larger, more established companies.

Performance

The following bar chart and table provide some indication of the risks of investing in the Series. The bar chart shows changes in the Series' performance from year to year over a 10-year period. The table shows how the Series' average annual returns compare to those of a broad-based securities market index. The Series' past performance is not necessarily an indication of how the Series will perform in the future. The Series' returns in the chart and table do not reflect the deduction of any separate account or variable contract charges. The returns would have been less than those shown if such charges were deducted.

Calendar Year Annual Total Returns for Class A Shares



Best Quarter: 2Q/2009 16.58% Worst Quarter: 4Q/2008: -25.51% Year to date (3/31/18): 8.23%

Average Annual Total Returns (for the periods ended 12/31/17)	1 Year	5 Years	10 Years	Since Inception Class I (4/30/13)
Class A	40.85%	21.45%	10.18%	—
Class I	41.16%	—	—	20.68%
Russell 2000 [®] Growth Index (does not reflect fees or expenses)	22.17%	15.21%	9.19%	13.48%

Class I Shares have been in existence only since April 30, 2013; therefore, limited performance information for Class I Shares is available to include here. However, the returns for Class I Shares for other periods would have been substantially similar to those shown for Class A Shares because Class I Shares and Class A Shares are invested in the same portfolio of securities. Class A Shares pay distribution and services (12b-1) fees and Class I Shares do not; therefore, had the Class I Shares been operational during the periods shown only for Class A Shares, investment performance for Class I Shares would have been higher than for Class A Shares.

The Russell 2000[®] Growth Index is a market capitalization-weighted index of growth-oriented stocks of the smallest 2,000 companies in the Russell Universe, which comprises the 3,000 largest U.S. companies. The index is calculated on a total-return basis with dividends reinvested. The index is unmanaged and not available for direct investment.

Updated performance information is available at virtus.com or by calling 800-367-5877.

Management

The Adviser and Subadviser

Virtus Investment Advisers, Inc. (“VIA”) is the investment adviser to the Series.

Kayne Anderson Rudnick Investment Management LLC (“KAR”), an affiliate of VIA, is the subadviser to the Series.

Portfolio Managers

- > **Todd Beiley, CFA**, Senior Research Analyst at KAR. Mr. Beiley has served as a Portfolio Manager of the Series since November 2010.
- > **Jon Christensen, CFA**, Senior Research Analyst at KAR. Mr. Christensen has served as a Portfolio Manager of the Series since November 2010.

Purchase and Sale of Series Shares

The Series does not offer its shares to the general public. The Series currently offers shares only to the separate accounts of participating insurance companies. Virtus Variable Insurance Trust (the “Trust”), of which the Series is a separate investment portfolio, has entered into an agreement with the insurance company sponsor of each separate account (participation agreement) setting forth the terms and conditions pursuant to which the insurance company will purchase and redeem shares of the Series. For information concerning the purchase of units of the separate accounts, see the variable contract prospectus.

Tax Information

Since the separate accounts are the only shareholders of the Series, no discussion is included herein as to the federal income tax consequences at the shareholder level. For information concerning the federal income tax consequences to the purchasers of variable contracts, see the variable contract prospectus which describes the particular separate account and variable contract.

Payments to Insurance Companies and Other Financial Intermediaries

Series shares are generally available only through intermediaries, *i.e.*, the separate accounts. The Series (and/or its related companies) may pay the insurance companies (and/or their related companies) for distribution and/or other services; some of the payments may, in turn, go to broker-dealers and other financial intermediaries. For example, the Series may make payments for sub-transfer agency services to one or more of the insurance companies. Such payments may create a conflict of interest for an intermediary by influencing the intermediary's investment recommendations, or be a factor in the insurance company's decision to include the Series as an underlying investment option in a variable contract. Ask your salesperson or review your variable contract prospectus for more information.

More About Principal Investment Strategies

Under normal circumstances, the Series invests at least 80% of its assets in common stocks of small capitalization companies. As of the date of this Prospectus, the subadviser considers small capitalization companies for this purpose to be those companies that, at the time of initial purchase, have market capitalizations within the range of companies included in the Russell 2000[®] Growth Index on a rolling three-year basis. Because small capitalization companies are defined by reference to an index, the market capitalization of companies in which the Series invests may vary with market conditions. As of December 31, 2017, the total market capitalization range of companies included in the Russell 2000[®] Growth Index over the past three years was \$6 million to \$13.5 billion. The Series' policy of investing 80% of its assets in small capitalization companies may be changed only upon 60 days' written notice to shareholders.

The subadviser uses a strategy emphasizing consistently growing, highly profitable, low debt companies with rising cash flows which the subadviser deems to be of high quality. If a company meets these criteria, the subadviser researches and analyzes that company's strength of management, relative competitive position in the industry and its financial structure. A proprietary model is used to determine relative value. Generally, the Series invests in approximately 20-35 securities at any given time.

The subadviser's sell discipline seeks to dispose of holdings that, among other things, achieve a target price, or are the subject of negative developments individually or as an industry, or as necessary to provide funding to upgrade and improve portfolio holdings or meet diversification requirements.

The Series' investment objective is non-fundamental, which means it may be changed without shareholder approval.

Temporary Defensive Strategy: During periods of adverse market conditions, the Series may take temporary defensive positions that are inconsistent with its principal investment strategies by holding all or part of its assets in cash and short-term money market instruments, including obligations of the U.S. Government, high-quality commercial paper, certificates of deposit, bankers' acceptances, bank interest-bearing demand accounts, and repurchase agreements secured by U.S. Government securities. When this allocation happens, the Series may not achieve its objective.

Please see "More About Principal Risks" for information about the risks of investing in the Series.

More About Principal Risks

The Series' investments are subject generally to market risk and the risk of selecting underperforming securities and asset classes, which may adversely affect the Series and lead to loss of principal.

Depository Receipts

The Series may invest in American Depositary Receipts (ADRs) sponsored by U.S. banks, European Depositary Receipts (EDRs), Global Depositary Receipts (GDRs), ADRs not sponsored by U.S. banks, other types of depository receipts (including non-voting depository receipts) and other similar instruments representing securities of foreign companies.

Although certain depository receipts may reduce or eliminate some of the risks associated with foreign investing, these types of securities generally are subject to many of the same risks as direct investments in securities of foreign issuers.

Equity Securities

Generally, prices of equity securities are more volatile than those of fixed income securities. The prices of equity securities will rise and fall in response to a number of different factors. In particular, equity securities will respond to events that affect entire financial markets or industries (such as changes in inflation or consumer demand) and to events that affect particular issuers (such as news about the success or failure of a new product). Equity securities also are subject to “stock market risk,” meaning that stock prices in general may decline over short or extended periods of time. When the value of the stocks held by the Series goes down, the value of the Series’ shares will be affected.

- **Growth Stocks Risk.** Growth stocks can react differently to issuer, political, market, and economic developments than the market as a whole and other types of stocks. Growth stocks also tend to be more expensive relative to their earnings or assets compared to other types of stocks, and as a result they tend to be sensitive to changes in their earnings and more volatile than other types of stocks.
- **Small Market Capitalization Companies Risk.** Small companies often have narrower markets, fewer products or services to offer, and more limited managerial and financial resources than larger, more established companies. As a result, the performance of small companies may be more volatile, and they may face a greater risk of business failure, which could increase the volatility and risk of loss to the Series.

Foreign Investing

Investing in securities of non-U.S. companies involves special risks and considerations not typically associated with investing in U.S. companies, and the values of non-U.S. securities may be more volatile than those of U.S. securities. The values of non-U.S. securities are subject to economic and political developments in countries and regions where the issuers operate or are domiciled, or where the securities are traded, such as changes in economic or monetary policies, and to changes in currency exchange rates. Values may also be affected by restrictions on receiving the investment proceeds from a non-U.S. country.

In general, less information is publicly available about non-U.S. companies than about U.S. companies. Non-U.S. companies are generally not subject to the same accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards as are U.S. companies. Certain foreign issuers classified as passive foreign investment companies may be subject to additional taxation risk.

- **Currency Rate Risk.** Because the foreign securities in which the Series invests generally trade in currencies other than the U.S. dollar, changes in currency exchange rates will affect the Series’ net asset value, the value of dividends and interest earned, and gains and losses realized on the sale of securities. Because the value of the Series’ shares is calculated in U.S. dollars, it is possible for the Series to lose money by investing in a foreign security if the local currency of a foreign market depreciates against the U.S. dollar, even if the local currency value of the Series’ holdings goes up. Generally, a strong U.S. dollar relative to such other currencies will adversely affect the value of the Series’ holdings in foreign securities.

Limited Number of Investments

Because the Series invests in a limited number of securities, the Series’ portfolio will be more susceptible to factors adversely affecting issuers of securities in the Series’ portfolio than would a series holding a greater number of securities.

Market Volatility

The value of the securities in which the Series invests may go up or down in response to the prospects of individual companies and/or general economic conditions. Price changes may be temporary or may last for extended periods.

Instability in the financial markets has exposed the Series to greater market and liquidity risk and potential difficulty in valuing portfolio instruments that it holds. In response to financial markets that experienced extreme volatility, and in some cases a lack of liquidity, the US Government has taken a number of unprecedented actions, including acquiring

distressed assets from financial institutions and acquiring ownership interests in those institutions. The implications of government ownership and disposition of these assets are unclear. Additional legislation or government regulation may also change the way in which the Series itself is regulated, which could limit or preclude the Series' ability to achieve its investment objective.

Management of the Series

The Adviser

VIA has served as the investment adviser to the Series since November 2010. VIA, located at 100 Pearl Street, Hartford, CT 06103, acts as the investment adviser for over 50 mutual funds and as adviser to institutional clients. As of December 31, 2017, VIA had approximately \$29.2 billion in assets under management. VIA has acted as an investment adviser for over 80 years and is an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of Virtus Investment Partners, Inc., a publicly traded multi-manager asset management business.

Pursuant to the Investment Advisory Agreement with the Series and subject to the direction of the Trust's Board of Trustees, VIA is responsible for managing the Series' investment program in conformity with the stated policies of the Series as described in this prospectus. VIA, with the approval of the Trust's Board of Trustees, has selected KAR, an affiliate of VIA, to serve as subadviser and perform the day-to-day portfolio management of the Series. KAR, subject to the supervision of VIA, is responsible for deciding which securities to purchase and sell for the Series and for placing the Series' transactions.

The Series pays VIA an investment management fee that is accrued daily against the value of the Series' net assets at the following annual rate:

1st \$1 billion	Over \$1 billion
0.85%	0.80%

For its last fiscal year, the Series paid advisory fees at the rate of 0.85% of its average net assets.

The Trust has entered into an expense limitation agreement with VIA whereby VIA has agreed to reimburse the Series for expenses necessary or appropriate for the operation of the Series (excluding certain expenses, such as front-end or contingent deferred sales charges, taxes, leverage expenses, interest, brokerage commissions, expenses incurred in connection with any merger or reorganization, unusual or infrequently occurring expenses (such as litigation), acquired fund fees and expenses, and dividend expenses, if any) to the extent that such expenses exceed 1.19% of the Series' Class A Shares and 0.94% of the Series' Class I Shares average net assets. This expense limitation agreement is in place through April 30, 2019. After April 30, 2019, VIA may discontinue this expense reimbursement arrangement at any time. Under certain conditions, VIA may recapture operating expenses reimbursed under an expense reimbursement arrangement for a period of three years after the date on which it was incurred or waived by Virtus.

VIA serves as a manager of managers of the Series. In this capacity, VIA: (i) sets the Series' overall investment strategies; (ii) evaluates, selects, and recommends to the Board one or more subadvisers needed to manage all or part of the assets of the Series; (iii) monitors and evaluates the subadvisers' investment programs and results as well as the performance of the subadvisers relative to the applicable benchmark indexes; and (iv) reviews the Series' compliance with its investment objectives, policies and restrictions.

The Trust and VIA have each received an exemptive order from the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") that permits VIA, subject to certain conditions and without the approval of shareholders to: (a) employ a new unaffiliated subadviser for a Series pursuant to the terms of a new subadvisory agreement, in each case either as a replacement for an exiting subadviser or as an additional subadviser; (b) change the terms of any subadvisory agreement; and (c) continue the employment of an existing subadviser on the same subadvisory agreement terms where an agreement has been assigned because of a change in control of the subadviser. In such circumstances, shareholders would receive notice of such action, including the information concerning the new subadviser that normally is provided in a proxy statement.

The Subadviser

KAR, an affiliate of VIA, has served as subadviser to the Series since November 2010. KAR is located at 1800 Avenue of the Stars, 2nd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90067. KAR acts as subadviser to mutual funds and as investment adviser to institutions and individuals. As of December 31, 2017, KAR had approximately \$18.9 billion in assets under management.

From its investment advisory fee, VIA, not the Series, pays KAR for its subadvisory services at the rate of 50% of the net advisory fee.

Board of Trustees' Approval of Investment Advisory and Subadvisory Agreements

The Trust's annual report to shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2017 contains a discussion regarding the basis for the Trust's Board of Trustees' approval of the investment advisory and investment subadvisory agreements for the Series.

Portfolio Management

The following individuals are the members of the team of equity investment professionals jointly and primarily responsible for the day-to-day management of the Series' portfolio.

- > **Todd Beiley, CFA** Mr. Beiley has served as Portfolio Manager since November 2010. He is also a Portfolio Manager of other funds managed by KAR. Before joining KAR in 2002, Mr. Beiley was an associate analyst in equity research at Prudential Securities. He has over 16 years of investment industry experience.
- > **Jon Christensen, CFA** Mr. Christensen has served as Portfolio Manager since November 2010. He is also a Portfolio Manager of other funds managed by KAR. Before joining KAR in 2001, he was a portfolio manager and senior research analyst for Doheny Asset Management. Mr. Christensen has approximately 20 years of investment industry experience.

The statement of additional information ("SAI") provides additional information about the portfolio managers' compensation, other accounts managed by the portfolio managers and the portfolio managers' ownership of securities in the Series.

Risks Associated with Other Investment Strategies and Series Operations

Information about the Series' principal investment strategies and risks appears in the Fund Summary section and the sections entitled "More About Principal Investment Strategies" and "More About Principal Risks" above.

The information below describes other investment strategies that the Series may use that are not principal strategies and the risks of those strategies, arranged in alphabetical order, as well as other operational risks. Further descriptions of these investment strategies and practices can be found in the SAI.

The greater an investment in a particular asset class by the Series, the greater the impact to the Series of the risks related to the class.

Cybersecurity

With the increased use of technologies such as the Internet to conduct business, the Series have become potentially more susceptible to operational and information security risks through breaches in cybersecurity. In general, a breach in cybersecurity can result from either a deliberate attack or an unintentional event. Cybersecurity breaches may involve, among other things, infection by computer viruses or other malicious software code or unauthorized access to the digital information systems, networks or devices of the Series or their service providers (including, but not limited to, the Series' investment adviser, transfer agent, custodian, administrators and other financial intermediaries) through "hacking" or other means, in each case for the purpose of misappropriating assets or sensitive information (including, for example, personal shareholder information), corrupting data or causing operational disruption or failures in the physical infrastructure or operating systems that support the Series. Any such cybersecurity breaches or losses of service may cause the Series to lose proprietary information, suffer data corruption or lose operational capacity, which, in turn, could cause the Series to incur regulatory penalties, reputational damage, additional compliance costs associated with corrective measures, and/or financial loss. While the Series and their service providers have established business continuity plans and risk management systems designed to prevent or reduce the impact of cybersecurity attacks, there are inherent limitations in such plans and systems due in part to the ever-changing nature of technology and cybersecurity attack tactics, and there is a possibility that certain risks have not been adequately

identified or prepared for. Cybersecurity risks may also impact issuers of securities in which the Series invest, which may cause the Series' investments in such issuers to lose value.

Derivatives

Derivative transactions are contracts whose value is derived from the value of an underlying asset, index or rate, including futures, options, non-deliverable forwards, forward foreign currency exchange contracts and swap agreements. The Series may use derivatives to hedge against factors that affect the value of its investments, such as interest rates and foreign currency exchange rates. The Series may also utilize derivatives as part of its overall investment technique to gain or lessen exposure to various securities, markets, volatility, dividend payments and currencies.

Derivatives typically involve greater risks than traditional investments. It is generally more difficult to ascertain the risk of, and to properly value, derivative contracts. Many derivatives, and particularly those that are privately negotiated, are complex and often valued subjectively. Improper valuations can result in increased cash payment requirements to counterparties or a loss of value to the Series. The prices of derivatives may move in unexpected ways, especially in abnormal market conditions. Derivatives are usually less liquid than traditional securities and are subject to counterparty risk (the risk that the other party to the contract will default or otherwise not be able to perform its contractual obligations). In addition, some derivatives transactions may involve potentially unlimited losses.

Derivative contracts entered into for hedging purposes may also subject the Series to losses if the contracts do not correlate with the assets, indexes or rates they were designed to hedge. Gains and losses derived from hedging transactions are, therefore, more dependent upon the subadviser's ability to correctly predict the movement of the underlying asset prices, indexes or rates.

As an investment company registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"), the Series is required to identify on its books (often referred to as "asset segregation") liquid assets, or engage in other SEC-approved measures, to "cover" open positions with respect to certain kinds of derivative instruments. If the Series invests in such instruments and has insufficient cash to meet such requirements, it may have to sell other investments, including at disadvantageous times.

Governments, agencies and/or other regulatory bodies may adopt or change laws or regulations that could adversely affect the Series' ability to invest in derivatives as the Series' subadviser intends. The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the "Dodd-Frank Act"), among other things, grants the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (the "CFTC") and SEC broad rulemaking authority to implement various provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act including comprehensive regulation of the over-the-counter ("OTC") derivatives market. The implementation of the Dodd-Frank Act could adversely affect the Series by placing limits on derivative transactions, and/or increasing transaction and/or regulatory compliance costs. For example, the CFTC has recently adopted new rules that will apply a new aggregation standard for position limit purposes, which may further limit the Series' ability to trade futures contracts and swaps.

There are also special tax rules applicable to certain types of derivatives, which could affect the amount, timing and character of the Series' income or loss and hence of its distributions to shareholders by causing holding period adjustments, converting short-term capital losses into long-term capital losses, and accelerating the Series' income or deferring its losses. The Series' use of derivatives may also increase the amount of taxes payable by shareholders or the resources required by the Series or its adviser and/or subadviser(s) to comply with particular regulatory requirements.

Exchange-Traded Funds ("ETFs")

ETFs invest in a portfolio of securities designed to track a particular market segment or index. The risks associated with investing in ETFs generally reflect the risks of owning shares of the underlying securities the ETF is designed to track, although lack of liquidity in an ETF could result in its value being more volatile than the underlying portfolio of securities. Assets invested in ETFs incur a layering of expenses, including operating costs and advisory fees that Series shareholders indirectly bear; such expenses may exceed the expenses the Series would incur if it invested directly in the underlying portfolio of securities the ETF is designed to track. Shares of ETFs trade on a securities exchange and may trade at, above, or below their net asset value.

Illiquid and Restricted Securities

Certain securities in which the Series invests may be difficult to sell at the time and price beneficial to the Series, for example due to low trading volumes or legal restrictions. When there is no willing buyer or a security cannot be readily

sold, the Series may have to sell at a lower price or may be unable to sell the security at all. The sale of such securities may also require the Series to incur expenses in addition to those normally associated with the sale of a security.

Leverage

When the Series makes investments in futures contracts, forward contracts, swaps and other derivative instruments, the futures contracts, forward contracts, swaps and certain other derivatives provide the economic effect of financial leverage by creating additional investment exposure, as well as the potential for greater loss. When the Series uses leverage through activities such as borrowing, entering into short sales, purchasing securities on margin or on a when-issued basis, or purchasing derivative instruments in an effort to increase its returns, the Series has the risk of magnified capital losses that occur when losses affect an asset base, enlarged by borrowings or the creation of liabilities, that exceeds the net assets of the Series. The value of the shares of the Series employing leverage will be more volatile and sensitive to market movements. Leverage may also involve the creation of a liability that requires the Series to pay interest.

Operational

An investment in the Series, like any mutual fund, can involve operational risks arising from factors such as processing errors, human errors, inadequate or failed internal or external processes, failures in systems and technology, changes in personnel and errors caused by third-party service providers. The occurrence of any of these failures, errors or breaches could result in a loss of information, regulatory scrutiny, reputational damage or other events, any of which could have a material adverse effect on the Series. While the Series seeks to minimize such events through controls and oversight, there may still be failures that could cause losses to the Series.

Securities Lending

The Series may loan portfolio securities with a value up to one-third of its total assets to increase its investment returns. If the borrower is unwilling or unable to return the borrowed securities when due, the lending Series can suffer losses. In addition, there is a risk of delay in receiving additional collateral or in the recovery of the securities, and a risk of loss of rights in the collateral, in the event that the borrower fails financially. There is also a risk that the value of the investment of the collateral could decline, causing a loss to the Series.

Short-Term Investments

Short-term investments include money market instruments, repurchase agreements, certificates of deposit, bankers' acceptances and other short-term instruments that are not U.S. Government securities. These securities generally present less risk than many other investments, but they are generally subject to credit risk and may be subject to other risks as well.

Distribution Plan (Class A Shares only)

The Trust, on behalf of each series of the Trust, including with respect to the Class A Shares of the Virtus KAR Small-Cap Growth Series, has adopted a plan pursuant to Rule 12b-1 under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the "Distribution Plan"). The Trust has entered into an Underwriting Agreement relating to the Distribution Plan with VP Distributors, LLC (the "Distributor") located at 100 Pearl Street, Hartford, CT 06103. The Distributor is an affiliate of the adviser, and serves as principal underwriter for the Trust. The Distribution Plan permits the use of Series assets to help finance the distribution of the shares of the Series.

Under the Distribution Plan, the Trust, on behalf of each Series, is permitted to pay to the Distributor (who may in turn pay other service providers) up to a total of 0.25% of the average daily net assets of Class A of the Series, as payment for services rendered in connection with the distribution of shares. Because these fees are paid out of Series assets on an ongoing basis, over time these costs will increase the cost of your investment and may cost you more than other types of sales charges.

More About the Trust and the Series

Organization of the Trust

The Trust was organized as a Massachusetts business trust on February 18, 1986. It was subsequently reorganized into a Delaware statutory trust on February 14, 2011. The Trust currently consists of nine series of which the Series is one. The Trust's business and affairs are managed by its Board of Trustees.

Shares of Beneficial Interest

Shares (including fractional shares) of the Series have equal rights with regard to voting, redemptions, dividends, distributions and liquidations with respect to the Series. All voting rights of the separate accounts as shareholders are passed through to the variable contract owners. Shareholders of all series of the Trust currently vote on the election of Trustees and other matters. On matters affecting an individual series such as the Series (such as approval of an advisory or subadvisory agreement or a change in fundamental investment policies), a separate vote of that series is required. On matters affecting an individual class (such as approval of matters relating to a Distribution Plan for a particular class of shares), a separate vote of that class is required. The Trust is not required to hold annual shareholder meetings.

Series shares attributable to any insurance company assets and Series shares for which no timely instructions from variable contract owners are received will be voted by the appropriate insurance company in the same proportion as those shares for which instructions are received.

The assets received by the Trust for the issue or sale of shares of the Series, and all income, earnings, profits and proceeds thereof, subject only to the rights of creditors, are allocated to the Series, and constitute the underlying assets of the Series. The underlying assets of the Series are required to be segregated on the books of account, and are to be charged with the expenses of the Series and with a share of the general expenses of the Trust. Any general expenses of the Trust not readily identifiable as belonging to a particular series shall be allocated by or under the direction of the Trustees in such manner as the Trustees determine to be fair and equitable.

Taxes

The Trust intends for the Series to qualify as a regulated investment company ("RIC") by satisfying the requirements under Subchapter M of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), including requirements with respect to diversification of assets, distribution of income, and sources of income. In general, a series that qualifies as a RIC will be relieved of federal income tax on its net investment income and net capital gains distributed to its shareholders. In addition, the Trust intends for the Series to comply with the investment diversification requirements for variable contracts contained in the Code. Moreover, the Trust intends to distribute sufficient net investment income and net capital gains of the Series to avoid imposition of any federal excise tax.

Accordingly, the Trust intends that, at the close of each quarter of the taxable year, (i) not more than 25% of the market value of the Series' total assets will be invested in the securities of a single issuer and (ii) with respect to 50% of the market value of the Series' total assets, not more than 5% of the market value of the Series' total assets will be invested in the securities of a single issuer and the Series will not own more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of a single issuer.

Actual and deemed distributions of ordinary income and net capital gains generally are taxable to the Series' shareholders, which in this case are the separate accounts. Because the sole shareholders of the Series will be the separate accounts, no discussion is included in this prospectus as to the federal income tax consequences at the shareholder level. For information concerning the federal income tax consequences to purchasers of the variable contracts, please see the variable contract prospectuses.

Disruptive Trading and Market Timing

As an investment vehicle for variable contracts, which are designed as long-term investments, the Series is not appropriate for "market timing" or other trading strategies that entail rapid or frequent investment and trading. Frequent purchases, redemptions and transfers, transfers into and then out of the Series in a short period of time, and transfers of large amounts at one time may be indicative of market timing and otherwise disruptive trading ("Disruptive Trading"), which can have risks and harmful effects for other investors. These risks and harmful effects include:

- dilution of the interests of long-term investors, if market timers or others transfer into the Series at prices that are below the true value or exchange out of the Series at prices that are higher than the true value;

- an adverse effect on portfolio management, such as causing the Series to maintain a higher level of cash than would otherwise be the case, or causing the Series to liquidate investments prematurely; and
- increased brokerage and administrative expenses.

Funds that invest primarily in international securities may be more susceptible to pricing arbitrage opportunities because of time zone differences between the closing of international and domestic markets. Funds that invest primarily in small and mid-cap securities may be more susceptible to arbitrage opportunities because of the less liquid nature of small and mid-cap securities. In addition, funds that hold significant investments in high yield bonds may also be susceptible to market timing because high yield bonds are often thinly traded so that their market prices may not accurately reflect current market developments. To the extent that the Series invests in these types of securities, it may be more susceptible to the risks of Disruptive Trading.

In order to attempt to protect Trust investors, the Trust's Board of Trustees has adopted market timing policies reasonably designed to discourage Disruptive Trading. The Trust reserves the right to amend these policies at any time without prior notice. Because the record owners of the Series are the insurance companies and not the variable contract owners, the Trust is not ordinarily in a position to monitor for or uncover Disruptive Trading by variable contract owners. Therefore, under the Trust's policies, the Trust delegates to each insurance company the duty to establish and maintain policies and procedures designed to detect, monitor and deter (including, without limitation, by rejecting specific purchase orders) investors (or their agents) whose purchase and redemption activity follows a Disruptive Trading pattern, and to take such other actions as the insurance company may deem necessary to discourage or reduce Disruptive Trading activities. An insurance company may only modify such policies and procedures if it provides reasonable notice to the Trust and the Trust's Chief Compliance Officer. Please see your variable contract prospectus for information relating to applicable restrictions on purchases or transfers through your variable contract.

The Trust may also take certain actions to stop Disruptive Trading, including imposing redemption fees for the Series and ceasing sales of additional shares of the Series to a separate account through which variable contract owners are engaging in Disruptive Trading. Because the Trust reserves discretion in applying these policies, they may not be applied uniformly. In addition, the Trust, as required under SEC regulations, has entered into an agreement with each insurance company under which the insurance companies have agreed to provide the Trust or its designee with information about variable contract owner transactions in the Series upon request.

Although the Trust will endeavor to ensure that each insurance company can and does identify and deter Disruptive Trading by its variable contract owners, the Trust cannot control their efforts or guarantee their success at deterrence. In addition, the Trust cannot guarantee that monitoring by the insurance companies and the Trust will be 100% successful in detecting all Disruptive Trading activity. Consequently, there is a risk that some investors could engage in Disruptive Trading while others will bear the effects of their Disruptive Trading activities.

Portfolio Holdings

A description of the Trust's policies and procedures with respect to the disclosure of the Series' portfolio securities is available in the SAI.

Investing in the Series

Shares of the Series are not available to the public directly. You may invest in the Series by buying a variable accumulation annuity contract or a variable universal life insurance policy from an insurance company and directing the allocation of the net purchase payment(s) to the investment option corresponding to the Series. The appropriate insurance company will, in turn, invest payments in shares of the Series as the investor directs at the net asset value next determined.

The Series offers Class A Shares and Class I Shares. Both share classes may not be available for purchase through your variable contract. See your variable contract prospectus for a description of the available share class(es).

Sales Charge and Surrender Charges

The Series does not assess any sales charge, either when it sells or when it redeems securities. The sales charges that may be assessed under the variable contracts or policies are described in the variable contract prospectuses, as are other charges.

Determination of Net Asset Value

The Series calculates a share price for each class of its shares. The share price (net asset value or “NAV”) for each class is based on the net assets of the Series and the number of outstanding shares of that class. In general, each Series calculates a share price for each class by:

- adding the values of all securities and other assets of the Series;
- subtracting liabilities; and
- dividing the result by the total number of outstanding shares of that class.

Assets: Equity securities are valued at the official closing price (typically last sale) on the exchange on which the securities are primarily traded, or, if no closing price is available, at the last bid price. Shares of other investment companies are valued at such companies’ NAVs. Debt securities are valued on the basis of broker quotations or valuations provided by a pricing service, which in determining value utilizes information with respect to recent sales, market transactions in comparable securities, quotations from dealers, and various relationships between securities. Other assets, such as accrued interest, accrued dividends and cash are also included in determining a fund’s NAV. As required, some securities and assets are valued at fair value as determined in good faith by, or under the direction of, the Board of Trustees.

Liabilities: Accrued liabilities for class-specific expenses (if any), distribution fees, service fees and other liabilities are deducted from the assets of each class. Accrued expenses and liabilities that are not class-specific (such as management fees) are allocated to each class in proportion to each class’s net assets except where an alternative allocation can be more appropriately made.

Net Asset Value (“NAV”): The liabilities allocated to a class are deducted from the proportionate interest of such class in the assets of the applicable Series. The resulting amount for each class is then divided by the number of shares outstanding of that class to produce each class’s NAV per share.

The NAV per share of each class of the Series is determined as of the close of regular trading (normally 4:00 PM Eastern Time) on days when the New York Stock Exchange (“NYSE”) is open for trading. The Series will not calculate its NAV per share class on days when the NYSE is closed for trading. If the Series (or underlying fund, as applicable) holds securities that are traded on foreign exchanges that trade on weekends or other holidays when the Series does not price its shares, the NAV of the Series’ shares may change on days when shareholders will not be able to purchase or redeem the Series’ shares.

Fair Valuation

If market quotations are not readily available or available prices are not reliable, the Series determines a “fair value” for an investment according to policies and procedures approved by the Board of Trustees. The types of assets for which such pricing might be required include: (i) securities whose trading has been suspended; (ii) securities where the trading market is unusually thin or trades have been infrequent; (iii) debt securities that have recently gone into default and for which there is no current market quotation; (iv) a security whose market price is not available from an independent pricing source and for which otherwise reliable quotes are not available; (v) securities of an issuer that has entered into a restructuring; (vi) a security whose price as provided by any pricing source does not, in the opinion of the adviser/subadviser, reflect the security’s market value; (vii) foreign securities subject to trading collars for which no or limited trading takes place; (viii) securities where the market quotations are not readily available as a result of “significant” events; and (ix) securities whose principal exchange or trading market is closed for an entire business day on which the Series needs to determine its NAV. This list is not inclusive of all situations that may require a security to be fair valued, nor is it intended to be conclusive in determining whether a specific event requires fair valuation.

The value of any portfolio security held by the Series for which market quotations are not readily available shall be determined in good faith and in a manner that assesses the security’s “fair value” on the valuation date (i.e., the amount that the Series might reasonably expect to receive for the security upon its current sale), based on a consideration of all available facts and all available information, including, but not limited to, the following: (i) the fundamental analytical data relating to the investment; (ii) the value of other relevant financial instruments, including derivative securities, traded on other markets or among dealers; (iii) an evaluation of the forces which influence the market in which these securities are purchased and sold (e.g., the existence of merger proposals or tender offers that might affect the value of the security); (iv) the type of the security; (v) the size of the holding; (vi) the initial cost of the security; (vii) trading volumes on markets, exchanges or among broker-dealers; (viii) price quotes from dealers and/or pricing services; (ix) values of baskets of securities traded on other markets, exchanges, or among dealers; (x) changes in interest rates; (xi) information obtained from the issuer, analysts, other financial institutions and/or the appropriate stock exchange (for

exchange traded securities); (xii) an analysis of the company's financial statements; (xiii) government (domestic or foreign) actions or pronouncements (xiv) recent news about the security or issuer; (xv) whether two or more dealers with whom the adviser/subadviser regularly effects trades are willing to purchase or sell the security at comparable prices; and (xvi) other news events or relevant matters.

Certain foreign common stocks may be fair valued in cases where closing prices are not readily available or are deemed not reflective of readily available market prices. For example, events (such as movement in the U.S. securities market, or other regional and local developments) may occur between the time that foreign markets close (where the security is principally traded) and the time that the Series calculates its NAV (generally, the close of regular trading on the NYSE) that may impact the value of securities traded in these foreign markets. In such cases, information from an external vendor may be utilized to adjust closing market prices of certain foreign common stocks to reflect their fair value. Because the frequency of significant events is not predictable, fair valuation of certain foreign common stocks may occur on a frequent basis.

The value of a security, as determined using the Series' fair valuation procedures, may not reflect such security's market value.

Redemptions

The Series will redeem any shares presented for redemption by the insurance companies holding such shares. Your insurance company's policies on when and whether to redeem Series shares are described in your variable accumulation annuity contract prospectus or variable universal life insurance policy. The Series expects to meet redemption requests, both under normal circumstances and during periods of stressed market conditions, by using cash, by selling portfolio assets to generate cash, or by borrowing funds under a line of credit, subject to availability of capacity in such line of credit.

Financial Highlights

The financial highlights table provided below is intended to help you understand the Series' financial performance for the past five years. Certain information reflects financial results for a single share. The total returns in the table represent the rate that an investor would have earned (or lost) on an investment in the Series (assuming reinvestment of all dividends and distributions). These figures do not include the imposition of separate account fees or expenses. If such fees or expenses were reflected, performance would be lower. This information has been audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, the independent registered public accounting firm for the Series. Their report and the Series' financial statements are included in the Series' annual report to shareholders and incorporated by reference in the SAI.

Virtus KAR Small-Cap Growth Series—Class A Shares

	1/1/17 to 12/31/17	1/1/16 to 12/31/16	1/1/15 to 12/31/15	1/1/14 to 12/31/14	1/1/13 to 12/31/13
Net Asset Value, Beginning of Period	\$ 21.61	18.75	20.73	21.72	15.66
Net Investment Income (Loss) ⁽¹⁾	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Net Realized and Unrealized Gain (Loss)	8.93	4.85	0.23	1.29	6.39
Total from Investment Operations	8.81	4.79	0.19	1.16	6.27
Dividends from Net Investment Income	—	—	—	—	(0.05)
Distributions from Net Realized Gains	(1.76)	(1.93)	(2.17)	(2.15)	(0.16)
Total Distributions	(1.76)	(1.93)	(2.17)	(2.15)	(0.21)
Change in Net Asset Value	7.05	2.86	(1.98)	(0.99)	6.06
Net Asset Value, End of Period	\$ 28.66	21.61	18.75	20.73	21.72
Total Return ⁽²⁾	40.85%	25.92 ⁽⁸⁾	0.73	5.50	40.20
Net Assets, End of Period (in thousands)	\$79,597	63,008	55,872	63,483	70,948
Ratio of Net Operating Expenses to Average Net Assets ⁽³⁾	1.19%	1.20 ⁽⁷⁾⁽⁸⁾	1.20 ⁽⁷⁾	1.19	1.19
Ratio of Gross Operating Expenses to Average Net Assets (before waivers and reimbursements) ⁽³⁾	1.30%	1.37	1.41	1.38	1.33
Ratio of Net Investment Income to Average Net Assets	(0.49)%	(0.37) ⁽⁸⁾	(0.17)	(0.62)	(0.63)
Portfolio Turnover Rate	18%	18	18	20	28

Virtus KAR Small-Cap Growth Series—Class I Shares

	1/1/17 to 12/31/17	1/1/16 to 12/31/16	1/1/15 to 12/31/15	1/1/14 to 12/31/14	4/30/13 ⁽⁴⁾ to 12/31/13
Net Asset Value, Beginning of Period	\$21.86	\$ 18.90	20.82	21.75	17.29
Net Investment Income (Loss) ⁽¹⁾	(0.06)	0.01	—	(0.07)	(0.03)
Net Realized and Unrealized Gain (Loss)	9.04	4.88	0.25	1.29	4.70
Total from Investment Operations	8.98	4.89	0.25	1.22	4.67
Dividends from Net Investment Income	—	—	—	—	(0.05)
Distributions from Net Realized Gains	(1.76)	(1.93)	(2.17)	(2.15)	(0.16)
Total Distributions	(1.76)	(1.93)	(2.17)	(2.15)	(0.21)
Change in Net Asset Value	7.22	2.96	(1.92)	(0.93)	4.46
Net Asset Value, End of Period	\$29.08	21.86	18.90	20.82	21.75
Total Return ⁽²⁾	41.16%	26.25 ⁽⁸⁾	1.01	5.78	26.28 ⁽⁶⁾
Net Assets, End of Period (in thousands)	\$1,858	353	179	275	137
Ratio of Net Operating Expenses to Average Net Assets ⁽³⁾	0.94%	0.95 ⁽⁷⁾⁽⁸⁾	0.96 ⁽⁷⁾	0.94	0.94 ⁽⁵⁾
Ratio of Gross Operating Expenses to Average Net Assets (before waivers and reimbursements) ⁽³⁾	1.05%	1.12	1.17	1.14	1.07 ⁽⁵⁾
Ratio of Net Investment Income to Average Net Assets	(0.24)%	(0.10) ⁽⁸⁾	(0.02)	(0.34)	(0.23) ⁽⁵⁾
Portfolio Turnover Rate	18%	18	18	20	28 ⁽⁹⁾

Footnote Legend:

- (1) Computed using average shares outstanding.
- (2) The total return does not include the expenses associated with the annuity or life insurance policy through which you invest.

- (3) The Series will also indirectly bear their prorated share of expenses of any underlying funds in which it invests. Such expenses are not included in the calculation of this ratio.
- (4) Inception Date.
- (5) Annualized.
- (6) Not Annualized.
- (7) Net expense ratios include proxy expenses.
- (8) Custody fees reimbursed were excluded from the Ratio of Net Expenses to Average Net Assets and Ratio of Net Investment Income (Loss) to Average Net Assets. If included the impact would have been to lower the Ratio of Net Expenses and increase the Ratio of Net Investment Income (Loss) by 0.09% for Class A Shares and 0.14% for Class I Shares.
- (9) Portfolio turnover is representative of the Series for the entire period.



100 Pearl Street
Hartford, CT 06103

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You can find more information about the Series in the following documents:

Annual and Semiannual Reports

Annual and semiannual reports contain more information about the Series' investments. The annual report discusses the market conditions and investment strategies that significantly affected the Series' performance during the last fiscal year.

Statement of Additional Information (SAI)

The SAI contains more detailed information about the Series. It is incorporated by reference and is legally part of the prospectus.

To obtain free copies of these documents, you can download copies at *virtus.com* or you can request copies by calling us toll-free at 800-367-5877. You can also call this number to request other information about the Series or to make shareholder inquiries.

Information about the Series (including the SAI) can be reviewed and copied at the Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC) Public Reference Room in Washington, DC. For information about the operation of the Public Reference Room, call 202-551-8090. This information is also available on the SEC's Internet site at *sec.gov*. You may also obtain copies upon payment of a duplicating fee by writing the Public Reference Section of the SEC, Washington, DC 20549-6009 or by electronic request at *publicinfo@sec.gov*.

Virtus Customer Service: 800-367-5877