YOU DID IT! — Cort Zackery McNeill shakes hands with Randolph Early College High School Principal Shea Grosch as he accepts his diploma.

RECHS grads urged to “take that next step’

By Terrence Jefferies

ASHEBORO — Seventy-six members of the Class of 2019 were encouraged to “take that next step with their whole hearts” during graduation festivities Friday for Randolph Early College High School (RECHS).

The event was held at the Journey Church in Asheboro. Friends, families, students, faculty and staff, as well as local officials and the community, were welcomed with a prelude by graduate A.D. Lyon playing the piano. He also provided music for the “Pomp and Circumstances” processional.

Laura Baugh, who served as co-Salutatorian with Macy Daniel, gave the student address.

“Many of us (have) discovered what it is to be a leader,” Baugh said as she reflected on her high school journey. “I encourage each one of you … to appreciate yourself and how far you’ve come already. No matter what your next step may be, take that next step with your whole heart.”

Corey Culp, a biology teacher at RECHS, was the keynote speaker. Dominic Turmenn, a 2019 graduate and one of Culp’s former students, introduced him.

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“We will always remember your classes for the many challenges we’ve gone through and how they’ve changed us for the better,” Turmenne said during Culp’s introduction.

Culp provided students and their parents/guardians with a few tips and pointers about embarking on the newest adventure in life after graduation.

“Surround yourself with peers that encourage you and speak correction into your life,” Culp said. He told them to “embrace the difficult time(s),” “find yourself” and “ask for wisdom.”

As part of that “difficult time,” he referred to the “refiner’s fire” as the “the trials in our life.”

“These trials” shape us. They make us either bitter or better,” he said. “Life presents us with a tough syllabus. It is oh so much better when we have wisdom.”

Culp recommended that parents trust that they have raised their children in a way that their children can now find their own path.

“It’s time for them to move into this world with you taking a different role,” he said. “Prepare for it … and allow them the freedom to find their way.”

“And feel free to charge them rent if they overstay their welcome,” he joked in closing.

The commencement program also included a rendition of the National Anthem by the RECHS Beta-Tones; a welcome and recognition by Samantha Coppers; opening remarks by Ashley Shackelford, Student Government Association president; and presentation of the class gift by Amiya Terry, Senior Advisory Council president.

The presentation of diplomas was conducted by Jeremy Peterson, College Liaison. Principal Shea Setzer Grosh gave the pronouncement of graduates.

The Valedictorian was Kris Lesnick. Junior marshals were Eddy Bernal Velazquez, Jewell Caputa, Yasmin Cervantes Servin, Jordan Corbett, Maggie Dunn, Tanner Maerz, Annastasia Myers-Kiker, Mercedes Parker, Andres Perez and Taylor Wallace.

HARD WORK PAYS OFF — Ashley Lane Shackelford, Student Government Association president, walks across the stage to receive her diploma during graduation festivities at Journey Church Friday.

MILESTONE — Jayde Frankara Trabett is all smiles as she accepts her diploma, one of 76 Randolph Early College High School students to graduate Friday.